THE ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

IN PREVENTING EXTREMISM

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the 38 people who have lost their lives to terrorist attacks in the UK during the time it took me to complete this research, and to those who are working tirelessly to prevent extremism in our communities.

Abstract

The threat of extremism is profound and the number of individuals being radicalised within local communities in the UK continues to grow. The Prevent Strategy was developed to identify, support and ultimately stop people being drawn into extremism. It relies heavily on community policing principles and engagement between local police and local people. This research looks at the relationship between Neighbourhood Police and Counter Terrorism at ground level. It questions whether community engagement *is* as crucial to countering terrorism as the Prevent Strategy suggests, asks how this currently works in practice, and crucially whether this could be improved.

The research uses West Yorkshire Police as a basis and identifies four Neighbourhood Policing Teams as case studies, keeping the focus on frontline practices. A mixed methodological approach including interviews with NPT and counter terrorism personnel, focus groups with community participants, analysis of police activity reports, and observations of on duty police officers and PCSOs was employed. This provides a comprehensive assessment of how West Yorkshire Police delivers Prevent in our communities and a wealth of data to suggest how these practices may be improved.

This research concluded that positive community engagement *is* a significant factor to the successful delivery of the Prevent Strategy and as such community policing principles *should* be at the forefront of preventing extremism, however the current role of NPTs within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy was found to be well below the intended level. NPTs have limited capacity to carry out engagement within communities for general policing purposes, and generally lack the confidence, knowledge and information to proactively engage within vulnerable communities on topics relating to extremism. Whilst these challenges could be overcome with increased focus on training, information sharing and re-prioritisation, it is clear that the reducing resources and increasing demands placed on policing nationally will also need to be addressed if local police are going to be able to play a more significant role in the delivery of Prevent.

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Abbreviations

CTU   Counter Terrorism Unit

NPT   Neighbourhood Policing Team

PEO   Prevent Engagement Officer

PC   Police Constable

PCSO   Police Community Support Officer

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Introduction

"Community policing is the cornerstone of counter terrorism," (Choudhary et.al., 2011, p.16) this is a phrase often used by advocates of neighbourhood policing and security experts alike, and points to an intrinsic link between a police service which works with communities, and its ability to protect them from great harms. In England and Wales the Prevent Strategy makes up one quarter of the Government's counter terrorism strategy CONTEST, and is fundamentally based on the principle that to prevent extremism thriving within communities, the authorities must work within *and* with communities to build resilience. Put simply, the strategy draws heavily on the concept of community policing as a tactic to counter terrorism. Whilst many agree with the theory that the police must work with communities to counter extremist influences within them, the integration of two very different policing purposes (community policing and national security) is much more complex in practice. This research has explored the principles and practices of both community policing and counter terrorism within West Yorkshire Police as a case study, to ascertain whether neighbourhood policing should be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, and if so how.

Research Area

The overarching aim of this research is to understand whether neighbourhood policing could and should be used differently to prevent violent extremism. To appreciate the motivations for this research, it is important to first understand how the Prevent Strategy currently fits into counter terrorism policing in England and Wales, and in turn how it links to community policing. The Prevent Strategy is one of the four strands[1] of CONTEST which is the overarching counter terrorism Strategy of the British Government. CONTEST fundamentally comes under the control of the Home Office department of the OSCT[2] but is

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[1] *The strategy uses the 'four Ps' structure of Prevent, Prepare, Protect, and Pursue.*
[2] *Office for Security and Counter Terrorism*

directed at operational level by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC, formerly ACPO).[3] The NPCC subsequently deliver this through their internal Police Counter Terrorism Structure (PCTS) which is also referred to as the Counter Terrorism Network. This network sits alongside local police force structures but is distinct in many ways; the clearest difference being that the Counter Terrorism Network is broken down in a number of regional Counter Terrorism Units, whilst police forces are generally aligned to historic constabulary boundaries. The North East Counter Terrorism Unit (NECTU) actually covers the geographical area of seven police forces; whilst it is staffed predominantly by police officers and staff from these police forces, it is for governance purposes, directed by the OSCT. This essentially means that whilst the Prevent Strategy is often referred to as a police led multi-agency approach, local police forces have little to do with the governance and implementation of it, and instead regional Counter Terrorism Units take the lead, involving their local police forces to varying levels across the country.

The overarching aim of the Prevent Strategy is to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop people being radicalised and drawn into extremism, it intends to do so by building communities that are resilient to extremist influences and supporting those who are vulnerable using many of the same tactics found in community policing. The strategy was drafted with a heavy focus on partnership working, community engagement and local policing, however in practice the policing element of Prevent sits predominantly within the wider CTUs and not the local police resulting in a disparity between how Prevent looks in the strategy and on the frontline. Whilst Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) are also involved in its delivery, the extent to which they are responsible for it, is unspecified by the Home Office, and as such varying levels and localised practices have developed across police forces. This research opted to focus on West Yorkshire Police as a case study to inform how Prevent can be delivered in policing. Understanding the level of involvement that NPTs currently have in the delivery practices of Prevent within West Yorkshire Police, whether there is a disparity between theory and practice, and the reasons

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[3] *ACPO TAM (Association of Chief Police Officers – Terrorism and Allied Matters) changed to the NPCC in 2015 (National Police Chiefs' Council).*

for this, were integral to the ultimate aim of this research, which was to establish whether NPTs could or should be used differently within the delivery of Prevent.

Research Aims

As mentioned above the overarching focus of this research was to establish whether or not NPTs could and should be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy. To ascertain this, the research began with an assessment of the importance of community engagement within Prevent, to determine whether NPTs should be considered a suitable 'delivery provider'. The second research aim was to better understand the current function of NPTs within the delivery of Prevent; as mentioned above there was a great deal of speculation regarding how this differed in practice from the initial intentions of the strategy, the final research objective focused on the logistical, operational, ethical and legal issues around whether the current function of NPTs within the delivery of Prevent could be altered. The three key research aims and how they were met are briefly outlined below.

<u>Research Aim One: To investigate the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy.</u>

Since its conception in 2003, the Prevent Strategy has been concentrated heavily on defeating extremism through regular and constructive engagement with communities that have been identified as potentially vulnerable to becoming supporters of terrorism or engaging in extremist activity themselves. The policy wording of the first Prevent Strategy identified community engagement as the integral aspect of Prevent and the most visible evidence of this is the repeated promotion of the Neighbourhood Policing Model in the literature (covered in chapter one). There was also a clear emphasis placed on community policing tactics such as increasing police presence in certain areas, making conscious efforts to interact with previously isolated communities, regular engagement between the local communities and partners, and monitoring confidence and satisfaction in the local police (Huq et al., 2011). This research investigated whether the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy was justifiable,

predominantly through a literature review which focused on the theories behind cohesion and community policing. The literature review also concentrated on the early policy development of the Prevent Strategy and its precursor the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund (PVEPF) which was widely criticised within the communities that it was implemented. Assessing the aims of these policies; (to improve community cohesion) against their outcomes (the impact they had on communities and counter terrorism policing), helped to firstly determine whether a strong focus on community engagement within the Prevent Strategy was justified, therefore leading to a further discussion around the suitability of the Neighbourhood Policing Model for the purposes of preventing extremism.

Research Aim Two: To understand the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy

The second research question focused upon the analysis of the function of the NPTs within the delivery of Prevent to date. This was crucial to the research as it would be futile to try and achieve an understanding of what the role of NPTs could or should be within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy without first understanding their current function. As noted above, anecdotal evidence suggested a disparity between the intended function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy and their role in practice. This was (and remains) a very contentious issue in that despite suggestions both in the policies and research surrounding Prevent which claim that Neighbourhood Policing should be at the forefront of community engagement and Prevent Policing (Bettison, 2009), in reality NPTs appeared to play a very minor role. Instead the task of dealing with Prevent Policing was designated solely to a few specialist Prevent Teams and Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs), these positions were brought in with CONTEST specifically with the intention of being overt links between vulnerable communities and the Police with specialist knowledge of localised extremism issues. The establishment of specialist Prevent Teams, led to speculation around the function of NPTs in Prevent; the strategy stressed the importance of community policing but then appeared not to utilise the well-established Neighbourhood Policing Model (and NPTs) to full effect. Later guidance advised that Prevent Teams should be positioned alongside local NPTs and the two should work together and share information in order to broaden the effect of

'Prevent Policing' in the local communities. This approach could be seen as an attempt to balance the specialisms needed for counter terrorism with the broad principles and practices of community policing, however, initial conversations showed that this suggestion had little impact on practice and the two teams continued to have very little interaction with each other; many NPT Officers were unaware of the Prevent Strategy, their local Prevent Officers or its implementation within their area. In order to establish whether this was an accurate reflection of the current relationship between the two policing purposes, this research investigated what the actual function of the NPTs was, through literature review, interviews, activity reports, focus groups and observations within West Yorkshire Police case studies.

Research Aim 3: Should and could NPTs be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy.
Achieving research aims one and two, provided much of the context needed to determine whether NPTs could or should be used differently within the delivery of Prevent. There were many different aspects to this research question; whether NPTs *could* be utilised differently was perhaps less complex; it required an understanding of the capacity and capability of NPTs in comparison with the needs of the strategy. This could be assessed relatively clearly through a review of NPTs practices, culminating in suggestions regarding the boundaries of NPT roles and responsibilities and whether these could be changed to include more or less involvement within Prevent policing.

Whether NPTs *should* be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy was perhaps the more complicated aspect. It required judgements to be made about the suitability of NPT involvement in an already contentious area of policing based on ethical and legal boundaries as well as the logistical impact of increased or decreased involvement. The issue of 'mainstreaming' Prevent across police forces through increased use of NPTs was already highly debated; on one side concerns had been raised over placing additional duties which require specialist care, a high level of understanding and time, onto police officers who are already at capacity dealing with a broad range of core-policing duties. Similarly critics of Prevent claimed that it was already a mis-handled strategy which isolated vulnerable communities and

that this would only worsen if NPT officers were involved. Alternatively it had also been said that NPTs as community focused police officers who know their communities, provide the best platform to initiate a broad community engagement strategy such as Prevent, and if given the correct training and level of responsibility (i.e. in support of PEOs, not instead of them) increasing the use of NPTs could broaden the impact that Prevent would have on communities in a positive way.

This thesis provides an in depth understanding of these issues through a mixed methodology approach, focused on the day to day delivery of the Prevent Strategy within West Yorkshire Police along with the perspectives of those involved. It has produced evidence to substantiate and negate the various claims made by advocates and critics of the strategy alike and provide suggestions about the most suitable way to include NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, based not just on any theoretical ideals of countering extremism, but also the practical challenges facing the police in keeping communities safe.

The research

The research used West Yorkshire Police as a basis and identified four suitable NPTs to be used as case studies (the reasons for this decision are outlined in chapter two). It utilised a mixed methodological approach to explore the same subject in different ways which included a literature review, interviews with NPT and Prevent staff, focus groups with representatives from communities vulnerable to extremism, activity reports outlining the day to day duties of NPT and Prevent staff, and observations of the same. A full overview of the research methodology is covered in chapter two of this thesis, however it is important to acknowledge the boundaries and timelines of this research for contextual purposes.

There are three key aims of this research which were met through the use of four key methodologies, interviews, focus groups, activity reports and non-participant observations. This is covered in more detail in chapter two which provides and overview of the methodologies, but it is useful to note that as each methodology contributed to more than one research aim, this thesis is structured in chapters of

methodologies. Each chapter sets out the method used, implementation, analysis of results and findings pertinent to each of the research aims. This is then brought together in chapter seven – discussions.

The Prevent Strategy was initially developed as a multi-agency strategy, and further revisions and supporting legislation such as the Prevent Duty 2015 sought to further entrench the responsibility of Prevent on a wide range of statutory organisations. However, whether intended or not, the police do play a leading role in delivering the strategy (some of the reasons for this are covered in chapter one). Whilst this research is cognisant of the partnership arena in which Prevent sits, it is focused predominantly on the police efforts to deliver the strategy and not the efforts of partner organisations.

The fieldwork period for this research commenced in April 2014 and lasted for a 12 month period, with preparation dating back to 2012. Much has changed within policing and counter terrorism during this time, the threat of terrorism has continued to grow and the tactics used by terrorists across the world have evolved. 2017 alone saw more terrorist attacks in the UK than the previous ten years combined, with the majority of these perpetrators being considered 'home-grown'. Whilst the national budget for counter terrorism had been protected during this time, there have been significant cuts to local policing, with community policing being hit hard. Many police forces, West Yorkshire Police included, have seen a significant reduction in police officer numbers from 5,687 in 2006 compared to 4,624 in 2016 (Burns-Williamson, 2017) and have consequently had to make changes to their neighbourhood policing structures. Whilst the research was adapted to suit the changing landscape it is necessary to note that some of the findings from the fieldwork will be less relevant in 2018, whilst some will be more significant than ever.

Chapter One

Literature Review

To fully understand the role of neighbourhood policing within the Prevent Strategy a consideration must be given to the existing literature and debates in relation to radicalisation, counter terrorism policy, policing practices, and community engagement within policing. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon and the term is commonly used throughout all elements of modern society whether in social media, in the press or within classrooms. The term terrorism and extremism have also become interchangeable by those in practice, whilst terrorism was traditionally used in attempts to describe actions and extremism to denote a mind set or ideology, the changing nature of the threat has resulted in them becoming seen as one and the same. In a recent public survey undertaken by Cambridge University and YouGov terrorism was perceived to be the primary threat facing British way of life by the public (Rogers, 2014) yet there is still no precise definition or criteria as to what constitutes a terrorist act. Historically attempts have been made by international bodies such as the United Nations to agree an all-encompassing, legally binding definition but due to disagreements around boundaries of inclusion this has not been possible (Hoffman, 1998). As an alternative, the international community has relied on defining and criminalising various types of terrorist activities to be used in conjunction with existing criminal law. It is generally accepted that any definition must include three elements; that the act is unlawful, uses fear of violence (terror), and is intended to bring about political or religious change. In England and Wales the Terrorism Act (2000) was the first of the current anti-terrorism laws to be passed by Parliament which aimed to prohibit actions which cause harm, intending to influence the government, intimidate the public or to advance a political, religious or ideological cause. Under this legislation there were 542 convictions for terrorism related offences in Great Britain between September 2001 and December 2015 (House of Commons, 2016). The nature and severity of these crimes often results in a great deal of attention from the media, law enforcement agencies and academics alike who ultimately want to know the same thing; why do these individuals choose to commit acts of terrorism and how can they be stopped?

The legislation created to tackle terrorism has been accompanied by the United Kingdom's strategy for countering terrorism more broadly known as the CONTEST strategy, and specifically the Prevent strand of this '4 Ps' strategy which aims to stop people being drawn into terrorism. The CONTEST strategy as a whole is very much directed at the police, criminal justice system and intelligence services, however the Prevent arm of the strategy was always intended to be delivered in partnership by those in education, health, local authorities and other statutory organisations with the police playing a less prominent role. Despite this initial intention, the Prevent Strategy soon became police-led, and although it has developed and evolved over the past decade, with attempts to redress the partnership balance, the police are very much a key stakeholder in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy (for wider overview see Stuart, 2015). For this reason, this research is focused on the role that the police play within Prevent - in particular the role of neighbourhood policing, and the impact that this has on the strategy as a whole, and the prevention of terrorism within England and Wales. Prevent and the wider contest strategy will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Radicalisation: a disputed concept

Another term commonly used but interpreted differently in discussions around terrorism is 'radicalisation'. Many academics have sought to define radicalisation, generally identifying it as a process by which somebody comes to develop extremist beliefs and consequently radicalisation is often cited as a precursor to terrorism (Crenshaw, 1981; Young et.al, 2015; Gill, 2007), there is however some dispute of this process by others such as Kundnani (2015), Sedgwick (2010) and Porta (2009). That said, policy makers around the western world of the early 2000s seem to have accepted without question that a causal link between radicalisation and terrorism exists and have subsequently built entire counter terrorism strategies based upon it; the Prevent Strategy being the most notable.

The British government defines radicalisation within the Prevent Strategy as *"the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism"* (HM Government, 2011). While the concept of radicalisation has been accepted by those in government for many years, reinforcing the official narrative that terrorism is caused by extremist ideology, there is a growing consensus amongst some academics that the theory of radicalisation is actually based on little empirical evidence, and as such, does not stand up to scrutiny. Kundnani (2015) states that *"radical religious ideology does not correlate well with incidents of terrorist violence"* (Kundnani, 2015, p.7), whilst Emmerson (the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism) goes on to criticise policies such as the Prevent Strategy. Emmerson claims that such policies are *"based on a simplistic understanding of the process [of radicalisation] as a fixed trajectory to violent extremism with identifiable markers"* (Emmerson, 2016, p.7) despite there being *"no authoritative statistical data on the pathways towards individual radicalisation."* (Emmerson, 2016, p.8). Kundnani's claim that there is no substantive link between radical religious ideology and the occurrence of terrorist incidents, combined with Emmerson's assertion that despite volumes of research into the topic there is no empirical evidence or statistical data to support radicalisation as an identifiable process towards extremism, suggests that any policy based on the existence of radicalisation, such as the Prevent Strategy, is inherently flawed. Whilst this is an interesting emerging dynamic and one which has been added to by Elshimi (2017), Aly, (2015) and Schmid (2016), with each terrorist plot (failed or successful) comes the opportunity to analyse and assess the background, mind-set, and motives of the terrorist(s). As a result, theories around radicalisation and the causes of terrorism have been developed over decades as individual cases have been studied and compared in an attempt to identify any common factors. The study of radicalisation incorporates theories from various disciplines including psychology, sociology, politics and criminology and consequently there are a number of different 'models' of radicalisation (Hudson, 1999; Nesser, 2004; Bjorgo, 2005; and Victoroff, 2005), this literature review will not attempt to cover all of the varying theories but will provide an overview of the key principles by pointing to key fundamental models.

Of those who agree on a concept of radicalisation, there is a general consensus that it is a process with identifiable stages where people gradually become more motivated to the point that they may be willing to commit an act of terrorism: "*In order to metamorphose from an ordinary citizen into a fully-fledged terrorist, the individual must progress through psychological and practical process*" (Young et. al. 2013, p.10)*. Christmann (2012) describes radicalisation as: "*a process of change, a personal and political transformation from one condition to another*" (p.10). Academic interest in this area generally has one key objective; to learn from those who have developed a 'radicalised mentality/psychology' so that common factors can be identified and appropriate interventions developed, to reduce the likelihood of radicalisation occurring in the future. One of the more widely accepted theories of radicalisations is Moghaddam's (2005) *Staircase Model* which draws on five metaphorical stairways starting with the ground floor where an individual becomes aware of certain material conditions such as a social situation or political cause, and ends with reaching floor five – considered to be the act of terrorism itself. This model is heavily reliant on the changing psychological perception of the individual which marks the next step in the stairway. The move from the first floor of awareness to the second floor requires a change in the individual's perception towards acknowledging unfairness and the consideration of option to fight. Unlike many other radicalisation theories which place higher emphasis on external triggers, Moghaddam's Staircase Theory focuses almost entirely on the psychological change in the individual. Whilst there are criticisms of this model (Schmid, 2016; Aly, 2015), the theory behind it is replicated to varying degrees across academic study. However, Lygre et al. (2011) point out that whilst there is empirical evidence available to support the concept of the five floors, there exists little empirical research to support the transition from one floor to the next.

Other theories of radicalisation that place a higher emphasis on the psychology of the individual include Gill's (2007) pathway model, McCauley and Moskalenko's (2008) 12 mechanism model, Sageman's (2004) four stage process, and the Prevent pyramid. Whilst these each have differences they do all

broadly follow the same tiered-process principle. Perhaps the most unique of these examples is Gill's pathway model which still comprises of four 'stages' but states that these do not necessarily follow a chronological order. Gill (2007) explains that whilst a catalyst in the personal circumstance of the individual is still necessary at some point for radicalisation the crucial aspect is the psychological interpretation of this event and not the event itself. This means that the catalyst or event can happen at any time during the individual's life (before or after the other 'stages' such as exposure to propaganda) but could still have the same impact. Whilst there is perhaps even less empirical evidence available to support this theory, it is still a very useful perspective to consider when looking at the theories of radicalisation objectively. One theory which has been developed following extensive research, case studies and detailed review is McCauley and Moskalenko's (2008) 12 mechanism model which details three separate levels of radicalisation and 12 accompanying mechanisms. The levels of radicalisation refer to the domains in which radicalisation can take place; the individual, the group and the mass, whilst the 12 mechanisms can essentially be described as triggers which relate to a stage in the process for example personal victimisation, joining a radical group, and ultimately martyrdom. Whilst this is somewhat more complex than many of the other models it does rely on a similar process but brings in more external elements than those proposed by Moghaddam and Gill.

Theories of radicalisation generally make reference to wider psychological and social factors which play a part in the 'process' with many referring to the psychological factors as vulnerabilities and external factors as triggers, for an overview of these discussions see, Crenshaw (1981) Corner et.al. (2016) and Pickering et.al. (2008). External factors are much more widely discussed, and are broader in their origins; these include cultural influences, political motivations, social dynamics or economic circumstances. Literature surrounding these external factors with regards to radicalisation generally seeks to inform counter-extremism policy by identifying the potential socio-economic and political causes of terrorism which can be influenced by central government at a state-wide level. These can include socio-economic deprivation (King & Taylor, 2011), high levels of trigger/signal crimes in the local area (Innes, 2014), poor

community cohesion (Pickering et. al. 2008), and a local historic mistrust of authorities (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). Internal factors are much more closely tied to psychological characteristics for example a propensity to violence or aggression (Borum, 2014), anti-social tendencies (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003), susceptibility to charismatic influences (Horgan, 2008) or perhaps a heightened sensitivity to humiliation or perceived oppression (Sherman, et.al. 2013). Of course much of the commentary around internal or psychological factors in relation to radicalisation can be linked to an ambition to 'profile' radicalised individuals as well as identify vulnerable communities so that those who are vulnerable to radicalisation can be identified before it takes place (Leader-Maynard & Benesch, 2016). However, it is important to note that despite a wealth of academic study into these causes or triggers of radicalisation, there is also literature which suggests that there is no psychological profile that sets apart radicalised individuals to anybody else (Post, 1998; Reich, 1998; Silke, 1998).

Whilst most theories of radicalisation refer to and rely on the impact of both external and internal factors, Crenshaw (1981) was one of the first to formally link these factors to the process of radicalisation in a way that went beyond the simple trigger notion and her interpretation of these factors within radicalisation provides a clear overview of how both social and psychological factors can contribute to radicalisation. In her 1981 article '*the causes of terrorism',* Crenshaw sets out four categories of 'potential causes' of radicalisation which emanate from the external and internal influences on the individual. Firstly there are situational factors which can be broken down further into '*preconditions*' and '*precipitant factors*'; preconditions refer to the existing situation of the individual and are in turn subcategorised into '*enabling'* and '*motivational'*. Enabling factors are essentially the means to which an individual could be radicalised for example the internet or access to radical groups or propaganda. Motivational factors can include social exclusion, racial discrimination or an inequality of some sort which could at some point be a basis for a change in mentality. Precipitant factors are slightly different in that they relate more to a change in circumstance such as a war or government policy rather than an existing situation. This first category of situational factors is very much focused on the external influences on the individual and so relates more

to the social factors as oppose to the psychological factors. The next three of the key categories have a higher emphasis on the individual and thus the psychological element of radicalisation. The second category detailed by Crenshaw is the '*strategic factor,*' this is again broken down into two subgroups; long term and short term strategic aims. Examples of a long term strategic aim would be to change or stop a government policy or to achieve equality across demographic groups, whilst a short term strategic aim may be to gain attention, funding or support for the cause. An interesting dynamic in this theory which is rarely assimilated in other interpretations of radicalisation is that these strategic aims do not have to be those of the individual in the first instance as Crenshaw's theory is less reliant on a chronological process. The strategic aims could actually be that of a wider terrorist organisation to which the individual does not yet relate, or likewise they could be personal aims which in time develop into malicious goals. The final two categories, whilst still reliant on external influence, link much more naturally to the internal psychology of the person; ideological factors are the third category and quite simply refer to the necessity for the individual to have or develop an ideology which supports taking action to achieve the strategic aims. Using the example of 'achieving equality' as a strategic aim; many people will feel that this is an important and valid strategic aim, however for this to be linked to a theory of radicalisation there must also be a supporting ideology which encourages and allows the individual to take action (both positive and negative) to achieve this aim. Individual factors are the fourth category and are much less specific. Generally speaking, the term '*individual factors*' is used by Crenshaw to describe the mentality that an individual must have to view all of the external factors in a way that actually leads to radicalisation. Critics may argue that this fourth category is simply a safety net or catch-all for Crenshaw which is based on very little empirical evidence. Not all people who have access to the internet use it for malicious purposes, and not all people who are socially excluded would view themselves as such, furthermore not all people would consider a disagreeable foreign policy as reason to act against it. Crenshaw states that although many people subjected to the same external factors do not succumb to radicalisation, others do and these people do so because of individual factors. More recent theories on external and internal factors link the two in a similar way; *"external factors like political, economic and cultural conditions indeed shape*

and constrain the individual's environment but they do not have a direct effect on individual behaviour. At the social and individual level, dynamics in which the individual is directly involved need to be started in order for external factors to lead to radicalisation" (European Commission, 2008). Simply put the two factors in isolation are generally not a concern, however the combination of certain external factors and certain individual factors can lead to radicalisation.

Interestingly a much simpler interpretation of the radicalisation process is the Prevent Pyramid which was developed through the research supporting the Preventing Violent Extremism work by the Audit Commission in 2008 and is actively used within the Prevent Strategy today. As with many other theories of radicalisation, the term pyramid is used to illustrate a number of tiers - four in this case. The lower tier represents the wider community, the second represents the most vulnerable members of the community, the third is the vulnerable members who have begun to move towards terrorism, and the top consists of those who are actively involved. This model concerns itself less with the social or psychological factors at play or the transition from tier to tier, but rather provides direction for those trying to identify and prevent radicalisation within communities and acts more of a strategic tool for a targeted intervention approach. The Prevent Pyramid, whilst not the most complex model does go some way to linking the theories of radicalisation (in particular the processes and factors involved), with options and responses to it, and whilst it is important to understand the debate regarding the terminology and process of radicalisation, it is perhaps more important for this research to acknowledge the intrinsic link between radicalisation and counter terrorism. Without fully understanding what causes people to turn to terrorism, authorities cannot expect to prevent the resulting terrorist acts. It is this rationale which is at the root of the Prevent Strategy which ultimately aims to "*intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity*" (HM Government, 2011, p.8).

Forms of extremism

Another key debate within the literature around radicalisation relates to the different forms and types of extremism and whether they evolve from different forms of radicalisation. The Prevent Pyramid like most theories of radicalisation does not acknowledge any difference in how individuals are radicalised towards different forms of extremism for example Islamic extremism or extreme right wing. Of those who agree that radicalisation exists and is causally linked to terrorism, the majority claim that whilst the external and ideological motivation may differ, the process remains the same (Backes, 2007). Although valid comparative studies are difficult to execute, those such as the Safire Project (2013) which compared groups of individuals from an Islamic background to those with a right-wing ideology have noted that despite the same process taking place, there was a variance in the emphasis placed on certain factors or triggers. The study showed that with the right wing group individual factors played a greater part including low self-esteem, the desire to be part of a group, and the perception of inequality. There is also a wealth of discussion noting the interconnections between right wing-extremism and ultra-criminality which is often distinguishable as an identifiable movement in a way that is not seen with other forms of extremism. Blee (2010), Durham (2007) and Eatwell (2004) have all contributed to this discussion noting that differences in how we define extreme right-wing organisations impacts on our options to respond to it. For an overview and further reading see; Blee and Creasap, 2010. A separate but similar debate within the literature relates to the potential differences associated with lone-actors. Some such as Pantucci (2011) and Ramakrishna (2014) have argued that the process of radicalisation is different for those who self-radicalise than for those who are recruited. It is argued that removing the external influence of recruiter or a group also removes a number of the social factors which can induce radicalisation. Boros (2008) and Harris et al. (2014) draw on theories of group psychology to explain the differences between these two pathways to radicalisation; within a group it is easier to build an extremist mentality than in isolation, a more submissive character may feel a higher level of diminished responsibility for actions that the group has taken as oppose to actions they would have taken themselves, similarly group polarisation means that often personal behaviours or beliefs in a group become more drastic in a way of showing

commitment to others, similarly the desire to be part of a group can manifest into an 'us and them' mentality. Pantucci and Ramakrishna point to potential differences in the events which 'trigger' the radicalisation process for 'lone actors' and the term 'self-radicalisation' suggests that there is no external influence that these dynamics are lacking however much of the literature suggests that the process for self-radicalisation does not differ too significantly. Those such as Behr et.al (2013) and Saddiq (2010) would in fact argue that despite outward appearance, those who self-radicalise are not actually acting in isolation. Today, self-radicalisation often takes place online (Rand, 2013), although those who radicalise in this way are alone in the physical sense, they are still connected to a wider network of extremist individuals through the internet; *"radicalisation on the internet is not necessarily any different to what would happen with other more private and less visible sources"* (Silber & Bhatt, 2007, p.30). Again this may not be in the traditional recruiter-recruit relationship, it could in fact be built up from a number of loose and anonymous connections between like-minded individuals who post varying degrees of ideological or motivational information linked to the same cause, without any personal engagement. It could be argued that people who radicalise in this way are still just as influenced by external factors as those who are radicalised within a physical social group but just in a more indirect way (Bouhana & Wikström, 2011). When an individual self-radicalises there is still a link with a wider group whether intentional or not, even if the individual goes on to commit an attack alone, the ideology driving the attack, the social factors and the motivational triggers will all originate from an external influence (Gill & Horgan, 2014). This argument supports the idea that the same overarching process of radicalisation applies regardless of the resulting type of extremism and is perhaps one of the reasons why the Prevent Pyramid, in its vagueness, is utilised by those who are seeking to prevent all types of extremism.

Community policing and the Prevent Strategy

The overarching aim of the Prevent Strategy is to prevent people being radicalised and drawn into extremism, it aims to do so via three key objectives; challenging the ideology of terrorism, supporting those who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and working with sectors and institutions where

there are risks of radicalisation. In short these tactics can be categorised as working with communities to challenge and support, and working with partners to reduce the risk. This section will summarise the two angles of the Prevent Strategy and explain how public engagement and partnership working have shaped the way that the police deliver the strategy.

Public engagement within the police has been a key element since Peel established the Metropolitan Police Force in 1829 with some of Peel's nine principles of policing being recognised as underpinning the modern concept of community policing.[4] One of the more evident principles is that "*the police are the public, and the public are the police"*, (Peel, 1829, p.1) which refers to the responsibility that communities and police have to act as one in the interest of public welfare. Although the prominence of community policing within modern police practice has fluctuated through the decades as demands and priorities have shifted, it has become more noticeable since the 1990s as the benefits of community involvement have been noted (Willard, 2001). With the increased use of the police car, less officers were seen on foot patrol, and the hard-line enforcement policies of the 1980s resulted in the need for renewed community policing in response to the alienation of communities (particularly minority ethnic communities). This was recognised in the Scarman report into the Brixton Riots (Scarman, 1981) and by many others since; Vito (2005) and Tilley (2003). In addition to this The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) has carried out in depth research into the effectiveness of community policing for the benefit of police-public relations and community cohesion, and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) have published numerous papers on 'what works' to be used as examples of good practice and learning for police forces. One such report, released in 2012 defined community engagement as "*the process of enabling the participation of citizens and communities in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems*

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[4] It is pertinent to note that the authenticity of "Peel's principles" have been questioned in recent years, however they have been referred to in this research to demonstrate the traditional community policing concept. For further reading on this discussion please see Lentz and Chaires, 2007.

and influence strategic priorities and decisions" (NPIA, 2012, p.1). This along with other literature goes on to state that there is a strong theoretical case for community engagement in policing and that there is evidence to support the theory (Khan, 1998; Larsen, 2004; Forrest et al. 2005). Evaluation of community engagement in practice across policing in the UK since the 1980s shows that whilst there is only "*weak evidence of community engagement reducing crime…there is fairly strong positive evidence for reducing disorder and anti-social behaviour, increasing feelings of safety and improving police-community relations and perceptions*" (NPIA, 2012. p.3). This has played directly into the policy formation of the Home Office over the past two decades, the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett announced in a lecture in 2003 that "*we must aim to build strong, empowered and active communities...*" (Blunkett, 2003, p.43). This was followed months later by the Home Office Green Paper on police reform; '*Policing: Building Safer Communities Together'* which focused on neighbourhood policing and localised engagement strategies. As a result of this guidance and direction, using neighbourhood policing as the bedrock for police and community engagement has re-emerged as a leading principle of policing in the past decade.

The main ambition of using community policing principles is to improve the relationships between the police and communities and build stronger, more cohesive communities, this in turn will help to build resilience to negative influences (including crime). Whilst there is a wealth of debate regarding community engagement practices and their effectiveness in achieving community cohesion (see Thomas, 2011), the synergy between community engagement and community cohesion as concepts is one that is generally accepted amongst many academics and police practitioners alike (Smikle, 2010; Sheider et.al., 2006; and Loader, 2006). The term community cohesion found prominence in the United Kingdom following the riots of 2001 and the subsequent government commissioned enquiries. The 2002 'Guidance on community cohesion paper' which followed the Cantle Report defined a cohesive community as one where: *"There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed*

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between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods." (Local Government Association et al, 2002). Whilst this definition is intentionally broad in order to relate to all agencies, when applied to policing the need for the police and communities to have a shared vision as one community links directly back to the Peel Principles. Government guidance and literature alike also point to the need for the police to be seen as treating different communities equally and building positive relationships with those in all communities, if strong cohesion is to be achieved *"there would be a significant risk to Community Cohesion if the police service were to choose which sections of the community to protect or behaved in an inappropriate manner, in that it acted in a discriminatory, unfair or partial manner."* (Smikle, 2010, p.35). The end goal for policing with regards to achieving community cohesion, is not just to have happier communities, between the police and communities so that people feel confident to share information and report crime is a fundamental aim, '*the more an area pulls together, the greater the capacity to combat crime'* (Hirschfield & Bowers, 1997, p.1,292). It is the stance of the UK Government and academics including (Stuart, 2015; Out, 2013; and Flannagan, 2008) that this concept can relate to all manner of threats facing communities from anti-social behaviour, to drug dealing, and even to radicalisation.

Much of the official literature over the years has discussed community engagement in reference to general policing practice, however it is important to also acknowledge the influence that this has consequently had on counter terrorism policies throughout the same period, which essentially prefaced and evolved into the Prevent Strategy that is in place today. The Prevent Strategy is not the first government policy intended to get upstream of terrorist acts nor is it the first to utilise community policing techniques with a counter terrorism objective. As noted previously, many of the theories of radicalisation rely on external or social factors including poor community cohesion, mistrust of authorities and social isolation (Crenshaw, 1981; Gill, 2008; and Sageman 2004); as a result, the ambition to improve cohesion in order to build resilience to radicalisation, is one that counter terrorism policing has built on throughout history. The British government has tried on multiple occasions throughout modern history to '*win the*

hearts and minds' of communities vulnerable to extremism in the same way that it would try to police communities vulnerable to high crime levels through neighbourhood policing.

Evidence of this includes literature from the last century which shows that these efforts have been varied and range from bids to gain support from local populations as seen during the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960 to desperate attempts to win back the support of Catholic communities in Northern Ireland towards to the end of the Troubles in the 1980s and 1990s. Although there are significant differences in the circumstances leading up to the implementation of these policies, not least the geography, era, and nature of the threats facing the government, there are also a number of similarities. In both of the cases mentioned, public engagement was central to the strategy and was intended to be enforced by those on the frontline; primarily the British Military. Another similarity is that the engagement element of these strategies was also used in conjunction with wider counter-terrorism/insurgency measures such as intelligence gathering; incidentally this combination of methods has also been criticised for contributing to the lack of trust and confidence in communities to engage with the authorities historically (discussed later).

From a review of government guidance, policing strategies and literature, the link between effective community policing and stronger community cohesion is clear. Similarly the theory that poor community cohesion can be a contributing factor towards radicalisation is also one which receives little challenge. The Prevent Strategy has been built around these two concepts; by using community policing principles, the UK Government hope to build communities resilient to extremist influences, and therefore prevent radicalisation.

The role of the police and partners in Prevent

The Prevent Strategy in its current guise was first introduced as part of the wider CONTEST counter terrorism policy in 2003 alongside the three other strands of Pursue, Prepare and Protect. Although the

government's response to violent extremism had been based around improving community cohesion since 2001, Prevent remained the least developed strand until the Preventing Violent Extremism programme was announced in 2006 (Thomas, 2010). It only really became prominent in the public arena from 2007 onwards, once the newly developed Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) were tasked with taking a more prominent role in its delivery (Stuart, 2015). Many have commented that the introduction of the Prevent Strategy brought with it a clear shift towards using police engagement primarily within Muslim communities that had not been as apparent in previous strategies, (Kundnani, 2014) as previously work had been centred on Local Authorities working generically across different ethnic groups for the wider purpose of improving cohesion (Thomas, 2008). The strategy placed a great deal of importance on reducing a community's vulnerability to radicalisation by improving community cohesion, based on theories which suggest that a more cohesive community will have more resilience to radical influences as those within the community will feel more empowered to collectively challenge negative ideologies or divisive forces (Innes & Jones, 2006). It was widely accepted that the police or any other authority (alone) could not instil strong cohesion within a group or community, but instead must provide the opportunities for good cohesion to thrive and support people within communities to come together for their own benefit. For this reason the level of police involvement in Prevent has been a contentious issue. Prior to the implementation of the Prevent Strategy community cohesion policies were overseen predominately by the DCLG and implemented by Local Authorities as the leading agencies. However subsequent reviews into these policies showed a lack of consistency across the country with the work that was taking place and a disconnect between central and local government departments (Thomas, 2010; English 2009; Birt, 2009). The Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund had aimed to rectify this by identifying where the need was greatest, examples of good practice and ultimately establishing more uniformed engagement plans across the country.

The introduction of National Indicators for Local Authorities, specifically National Indicator 35 "*building resilience to violent extremism*" (DCLG, 2008, p.35), was one way of formalising the requirements placed

on Local Authorities who were required to report back to central government on their progress. However, this was not a popular development with some Local Authorities initially refusing to adopt it on a matter of principle and/or capacity (Thomas, 2010). However, as the focus on extremism grew, so did the pressure on Local Authorities and in time all those communities with a significant Muslim population were involved with the Prevent Strategy. This ultimately meant that despite the initial intention for Prevent to be 'owned' by Local Authorities and led by the local communities themselves, more and more pressure was placed on all agencies operating within these 'vulnerable areas' to work together (including police forces).

In order to meet this demand, increasing emphasis was put on gathering and utilising intelligence to identify individuals vulnerable to extremism in order to 'get upstream' and implement the Prevent Strategy in targeted areas. As police forces were the agencies which held the majority of this intelligence and had the reporting systems in place to manage this, they naturally took a more prominent role in coordinating the Prevent Strategy at local level and as a result many would say (rightly or wrongly) that the police have become the lead agency within Prevent (Skoczylis, 2015). Advocates of the neighbourhood policing model would suggest that this is not necessarily a bad thing; this form of community policing involves, empowers and supports communities to work together and therefore improves cohesion; if good cohesion helps to prevent extremism within communities, then a community policing approach which helps to improve cohesion, consequently also helps to reduce extremism *"community-oriented policing could be their most effective strategy in dealing with terrorism"* (Docobo, 2005, p.1).

Discussions around the suitability of the police as the lead agency within Prevent are covered later in this literature review, however, it is important to understand this in the context of partnership working. The opening pages of the strategy specifically states that "*Prevent is not a police programme,*" however, it also acknowledges that the "*role of policing has been important in the development of Prevent to date,*" (HM Government, 2011, p.12) and it is widely accepted that whether intentional or not the Prevent

Strategy has been largely delivered and led by the police through community policing principles and structures with the support of partner agencies. As the strategy has evolved, attempts have been made to redress the partnership balance and place a greater onus on statutory partners aside from the police. Perhaps the most significant step in this direction was the Prevent Duty which was implemented under the *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* and placed statutory obligations on a range of '*specified partners*' to deliver Prevent. This duty aims to make use of existing multiagency forums such as Community Safety Partnerships formalised through *The Crime and Disorder Act 1998* and requires that all staff in the 35+ agencies *"have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"* (HM Government, 2015)*.* The duty guidance explains that there is no additional responsibility on the police to lead on the delivery of Prevent, but acknowledges that they will need to play a very specific advisory role and have a key part to play when it comes to the sharing of information regarding the threat of extremism in their local areas, for example through the dissemination of Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLPs).

Like all agencies named in the Prevent Duty, the police must ensure that Prevent is embedded across all areas of their organisation including "*patrol, neighbourhoods and safeguarding functions"* (HM Government, 2015, p.19) and all agencies (including the police) must link in with their local authorities who will direct and guide local efforts through their Prevent Coordinators through existing partnership forums such as the Community Safety Partnerships or local safeguarding children boards. Given that over a third of the specified agencies fall within the criminal justice sector and the guidance states that existing community safety mechanisms should be used, there is an implied level of responsibility placed on Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to coordinate and ensure that all named agencies within their force area are delivering on the Prevent Strategy as PCCs already have this overarching supervisory function across organisations. PCCs are elected officials who first came into being in November 2012 replacing the former Police Authorities, their core functions are to secure community safety within their areas through the oversight and coordination of their police force and local statutory partners.

Perhaps the clearest example of how the police are intended to work in partnership with other agencies are the Channel Panels. Channel or the Channel Programme was first piloted in 2007 and was later rolled out across England and Wales in 2012. Sitting within the wider Prevent Strategy, its purpose is to bring relevant partners together to assess and provide early support to people identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation. The Channel Duty Guidance which was published alongside the Prevent Duty Guidance in April 2015, directly states that Channel is a multi-agency programme and can only be effective with appropriate contributions from the key agencies; the "*success of the programme is very much dependent on the co-operation and coordinated activity of partners.*" (HM Government, 2015b, p.5) It goes on to explain that Channel is a safeguarding function and should be considered alongside efforts to safeguard those from harm by each agency involved. With reference to the role of the police within Channel; the Prevent Duty guidance states that the police must "*work in partnership with and support Channel Panels chaired by local authorities to co-ordinate Channel partners and Channel actions*" (HM Government, 2015, p.20). Principally the key role of the police is to assist with the referral stage of the process, by gathering information and producing an initial assessment file for the panel to consider; "*the police co-ordinate activity by requesting relevant information from panel partners about a referred individual. They will use this information to make an initial assessment of the nature and extent of the vulnerability which the person has. The information will then be presented to a panel*" (HM Government, 2015b, p.6). From this point on the police should have no more involvement in the programme than any other agency. In reality there has been mixed levels of police involvement across Channel panels; the theory is that Channel, and indeed Prevent as a whole, is safeguarding and should be dealt with as such by a partnership involving the most appropriate safeguarding bodies much like any other safeguarding issue such as neglect, or abuse (Stuart, 2005). However, the fact that the threat or vulnerability concerned is terrorism and potentially has a much bigger impact on the wider public means that it is difficult for the police to take a step back. The deeper reasons for this and the associated criticisms of Prevent Policing are discussed later in this chapter, however it is important to note that whilst Channel should be chaired and led by organisations other than the police, this is not the reality across all panels yet.

Despite attempts to redress the partnership balance within Prevent it is still often referred to as a police led programme. One of the key objectives of this research is to understand the role that the police play within the delivery of the strategy, whilst understanding the intended role is important, existing literature can also point to the actual role played and the reasons for this inadvertent onus on the police. Much like any partnership working arrangement there are a number of challenges which partners must overcome as a collective. Those such as Golding and Savage (2008), Phillips et al. (2002) and Pease et al. (2003) provide good overviews of such challenges, the governance arrangements around effective partnership working, and how this links to community confidence. Many of the key obstacles to strong partnerships within policing also relate to Prevent delivery; information sharing and accountability processes are perhaps the most significant (Berry et al. 2011). Until these obstacles are overcome, the partnership approach is hindered and the responsibility to deliver Prevent therefore falls back to the police.

To understand the issue of information sharing across organisations in relation to Prevent it is important to first set out the origins of the information being shared and the culture of ownership which often becomes a barrier. Although the origins of Prevent and Prevent Policing may stem from the community policing principles as highlighted above, they have also been influenced by other models. Tilley (2003) describes three "*relatively new models of policing: community policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing*" (Tilley, 2003, p.320). Community policing is not a single concept and often incorporates elements of the latter two models. Problem-Oriented Policing is an approach which aims to proactively address the underlying causes of incidents and crime rather than simply responding to the aftermath. It is heavily reliant on analysis and partnership working, with more recent commentary highlighting that communities are also considered a partner (Scott & Kirby, 2012). Intelligence led policing is essentially a way of focusing resources and efforts on the areas of most need to be more efficient and effective, which again relies on analysis to identify target areas. Those involved in the delivery of Prevent often stress that "*the most important element…is that Prevent is situated within a healthy community*

policing environment and that engagement is proactive rather than reactive" (Stuart, 2015, p.16). This suggests that elements of all three models are required; community policing allows staff to build meaningful and sustainable relationships with communities, whilst problem-oriented policing helps the police to get upstream of issues such as those linked to cohesion, political events, cultural developments, or potential triggers of vulnerabilities, intelligence led policing allows the police to analyse information available to them (some of which will emanate from the community) around the risks so that they can respond in a focused and proportionate way. Whilst these models are often described independently of each other, there are many similarities and overlaps between them. What is important to note here is that although much of the intelligence (or information) stems from the community or partners, it is collated, analysed and evaluated by the police and as such becomes 'police owned'. In order to ensure that this potentially sensitive information is not disseminated or used in a way that increases the vulnerability, threat or risk to the community or individuals concerned there are a number of legal safeguards in place.

The Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) is perhaps the most relevant safeguard to partnership information sharing; it traditionally set out five classifications for any information (document, report, intelligence etc.) not protectively marked, restricted, confidential, secret and top secret. Although changes were made in April 2014 to condense the first three categories into 'official' and 'official sensitive', the principle remains that these classifications indicate how sensitive the information is and thus how it should be handled within organisations. Whilst the vast majority of statutory partners involved in the delivery of Prevent are allowed access to information which is protectively marked (even up to the point of top secret in certain circumstances), there are often practical barriers to sharing. IT systems are often one such barrier; for security reasons, information graded under the GPMS system may not be shared on an email system which does not meet the required security standards as it can potentially be breached. Whilst partners have generally overcome this issue for information in the lower classifications it remains a perennial problem for those attempting to work together to share sensitive intelligence. An additional formality around information sharing which adds to the sometimes unhelpful culture of

ownership stems from the Management of Police Information (MOPI) which is a statutory code of practice for all police services. The Home Secretary implemented MOPI following the Bichard Enquiry into the 2002 murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman which found key failings in how the *"social services and the police shared information"* (Bichard, 2004, p.2). The new code of practice was intended to formalise information sharing structures and intelligence review processes. On the whole MOPI has been a positive move for partnership working, however there are instances where it can appear to be an obstacle. One of the key outputs of MOPI was the creation of the standardised Intelligence Report for police and partners also known as a 'Form A'. The key aspect of this report is that each one must be graded along three separate categories; the reliability of the source, the reliability of the information contained in the report, and the dissemination options for the report. This third category provides a handling code as to how that information can be shared, it is graded 1-5 with 1 meaning it can be shared widely if needed and 5 meaning that it must not be shared outside of the owning organisation. Whilst the original intention of this approach may have been to encourage better sharing of information across agencies, in the sense that any report graded 1, 'should' be shared where appropriate, the culture across policing and partners is very much that the report 'could' be shared if appropriate. Those such as Commander Jones of the Metropolitan Police Service and Simon Peace of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services are working towards overcoming this misinterpretation and culture across all statutory organisations including the health sector who have likewise been criticised for failing to share relevant information with other agencies due to patient confidentiality guidelines (NHS, 2016). There is a growing movement to attack the problem more broadly and replace the current 'Data Protection Act' to a 'Data Enabling Act' which has a more positive emphasis on the sharing of information. However at present the situation remains that partnership working arrangements in general and in relation to Prevent are often hindered by such barriers to information sharing. As a result, the information often stays with the police as the 'owners' and consequently so does the responsibility to respond.

One other suggested reason for why attempts to place a higher onus on partners to deliver Prevent instead of the police have struggled is that the level of accountability and governance over these partners as a collective is not currently as robust as is needed. As outlined previously, the Prevent duty placed a legal obligation on key partners to deliver Prevent, but it did not include any reference to how this would be monitored or enforced and as a relatively young piece of legislation there is no precedent yet to demonstrate what will happen to partners who do not meet their duty. Although it does not specifically state that PCCs are responsible for ensuring partner contribution, the literature (NCVO, 2017) has shown that there is an indirect inference placed on them as the Prevent duty states that existing partnership arrangements (which they have oversight of) should be utilised. The key obstacle here, as pointed out by Afzal (2012), is that PCCs do not have the same level of governance and accountability over other partners as they do the police. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011), under which PCCs were established, states that PCCs have a responsibility to "*hold Chief Constables to account, dismissing them where necessary*," and to "*bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up*" (HM Government, 2011b). From this alone, it is clear that the focus of governance for PCCs is very much on the police over the partners and that PCCs simply do not have the same level of control or power over partners to hold them to account should they not meet their obligations. Even with the best intentions, it is unlikely that whilst PCCs are given the responsibility to coordinate Prevent through all partners, that will inevitably fall more towards the police than to the other partners. There is no single position or department which oversees the collective work of all the partners concerned at a local or regional level, for example the courts and tribunal service is overseen by the judiciary, whilst the prison service is managed by the Ministry of Justice etc. The first point of overall oversight is in fact the Home Office, to further emphasise this issue the 2005 Audit Commission report '*Governing partnerships for better accountability*' highlighted that until a collective scrutiny body is formed which monitors and inspects the progress of partners as a whole is developed, responsibility will still fall to those who are monitored the most. Burns-Williamson (2013) argued that there is more scrutiny placed on the police than any of the other public services including those named under the Prevent Duty, through

national bodies such as HMICFRS the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and more local arrangements such as PCCs themselves, Police and Crime Panels, and the general public. Ultimately, the police are being actively monitored than others, and must be able to evidence their contribution to the Prevent delivery, and therefore it is more difficult for them to rescind responsibility to other partners who are perhaps not equipped in the same way. This chapter will further draw on literature around the role of the police within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy and whether it is an appropriate role as it presents some of the key criticisms of Prevent policing.

Criticisms of Prevent policing

There are a range of criticisms directed at the Prevent Strategy which some now consider to be a "*toxic brand*" (Shah, 2017), however for the purposes of this research, they have been grouped into three key areas; police as the lead agency and the Prevent/Pursue crossover, the alienation of Muslim communities, and the ethical issues around policing the pre-crime space.

Police as the lead agency

The police as a law enforcement organisation are inherently structured to catch or pursue criminals, consequently their involvement in the Prevent Strategy (as outlined above) has led to a key criticism which is that Prevent and Pursue are theoretically separate strands of CONTEST but ones that have merged in many ways not least by the police's role in both of these strands. The North East Counter Terrorism Unit (NECTU) as an example, is predominantly staffed and led by West Yorkshire Police, it has teams dedicated to Pursue (intelligence and investigation) and Prevent (engagement) who are all housed under the same roof, sharing the same systems and the same chain of command. Although these teams will have very different day to day duties depending on their remit, the overall goal is the same; to reduce the threat from terrorism in the North East of England. Aside from the natural evolution of the police's role in Prevent as outlined above, the merge between Pursue and Prevent perhaps stems more inherently from the style of modern policing utilised in the UK which, as outlined above, draws on elements

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of community policing, problem oriented policing and intelligence led policing. Although Pursue teams may have less of a focus on community policing than their counterparts within the Prevent teams, Pursue teams often rely on information or intelligence gained from communities to direct their investigations or activities. In many cases this information will have been gained via the Prevent teams who are actively engaging within communities so they can familiarise themselves with the issues at hand and work *with* the people in these communities not *for* them. This information sharing between the two teams also works in reverse; the efficient and effective use of limited Prevent team resources must be directed appropriately which will draw on intelligence led policing methods to identify the most suitable positioning of police officers within communities. Whilst supporters of Prevent would argue that the intentions behind this cross over are admirable, logical, and necessary to identify and prevent terrorist attacks, the fact that the policing strategies used here draw on aspects from all three models is also at the root of concern for many.

The fact that the Prevent Strategy relies heavily on the need for information (or intelligence) to direct activity; whether this is intelligence from covert tactics during an investigation led by the Pursue team or intelligence gained from communities via Prevent, feeds into the criticism that police 'engagement' within communities is no more than a ploy to gather intelligence from them. Furthermore when community engagement is used for the purposes of Prevent policing the sensitivities are intensified and this negatively impacts on the ability of vulnerable communities to trust the authorities trying to engage with them *"The young people we discussed these issues with in Bradford were clear that there was a breakdown in trust and Prevent was not working. A recent study has found that Muslim parents are so worried about a lack of support, and so mistrustful of the security services, that they are reluctant to report radicalisation"* (House of Commons, 2016, p.18). Unfortunately there is a wealth of evidence showing the detrimental impact that tactics which would traditionally associated with Pursue can have on perceptions of Prevent; Anderson, (2016), House of Commons (2010); Husband and Alam (2011), a well-publicised example being the use of Prevent funding to install CCTV cameras within a community deemed to have

a high vulnerability to extremism (Project Champion, Birmingham City Council, 2010). Of course this is just one example of this crossover and what is perhaps more problematic is the establishment of specialist police Prevent roles such as Prevent Engagement Officers intended to work within communities at ground level to learn about the local issues and feed back into a wider decision making model. The sceptics would say that this is no more than the tactical positioning of police officers for the purpose of intelligence gathering, and it has even been said that "*the Prevent programme has been used to establish one of the most elaborate systems of surveillance in Britain*" (Kundnani, 2009, p.8).

While there is an abundance of commentary against the involvement of the police within the delivery of Prevent and the resulting crossovers with Pursue (Kundnani, 2009; Thomas 2012; Khan, 2009), it is also important to acknowledge the benefits of having such a public facing and accountable organisation involved. As alluded to previously, the level of scrutiny placed on the police as a public sector service is intense, in addition to media and public opinion, the formal structures in place to hold the police to account on behalf of the public including PCCs, Police and Crime Panels, HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire and Rescue Service), internal professional standards departments and the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Committee). It could be suggested that if any organisation is going to 'lead' on the delivery of the Prevent Strategy either for engagement or intelligence purposes then perhaps the police are a safe option for the public. This of course leads on to a wider debate about the levels of confidence that the public have in the police, and would only be considered a positive, if the public could trust in the accountability procedures in place. In the strategy's early days, much of the police Prevent funding was focused on establishing specialist roles and teams, as time has passed, and perhaps in response to criticism, there have been concerted efforts of the police to mainstream the delivery of the Prevent across all areas of policing starting with those proactively working within communities; the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. These are officers who are already working within communities and in theory should have the trust and two-way communication to relay and alleviate concerns around their intentions and activities whether this is preventative or in pursuit of criminals. It is also worth considering

that the crossovers between Prevent and Pursue would likely occur to some extent regardless of which organisations are involved. Even if the current trajectory towards an increased partnership focus continues, and the strategy becomes truly led by a different statutory organisation such as the Department of Education; would this result in a greater separation of Prevent and Pursue? Whilst it is easy to see that the lack of uniformed officers involved in Prevent engagement would perhaps put some communities at ease with those engaging on sensitive topics, the fact remains that for the Prevent Strategy (or any other strategy) to work effectively, it must be directed by information about where the vulnerabilities within our communities are. The question of which organisation owns this information be it the police or Department of Education is irrelevant given that once any information comes to light which requires a police investigation or Pursue action it will need to be shared with the police under legal and ethical guidelines relating to 'duty of care'. The public will be aware of this link and so will still have the same reasons for mistrust and nervousness as they would if the police were the taking the lead. This leads into the wider discussion around what the role of the police should be within Prevent; if anything, it could be argued that the police taking such an overt approach within communities whereby Prevent Officers openly explain that they work for the police and will feed information into a wider effort to reduce terrorism is actually a tactic which is gradually helping to build trust and openness between them and these vulnerable communities. Spalek (2010) comments that *"partnerships between police and members of Muslim communities carrying out sensitive intervention work with those deemed at risk from committing acts of terrorism appear to feature implicit trust…This suggests that police within specialist counter-terrorism units underpinned specifically by principles of community policing are best placed to provide the kind of long-term interaction and trust-building that is required for sensitive partnership work to take place, for contingent trust to be built into implicit trust."* (Spalek, 2010, p. 792). This debate is integral to this research as we cannot fully understand what role NPTs should play within Prevent without also understanding what role the police as a whole should play within the strategy. This will be covered in much more depth throughout this thesis, however for the purposes of understanding this criticism of the strategy it should be noted that the true intentions of police involvement in Prevent (whether for

engagement or intelligence) can be argued from both sides. That said the initial intention or purpose of police involvement is somewhat irrelevant; the very presence of a uniformed authority within Prevent is enough to cause nervousness amongst many vulnerable communities causing many of them to withdraw from the strategy, this is potentially at least, Prevent's biggest downfall. Whether the solution to this is to reduce police involvement or to better communicate the role of the police within the strategy to the public is also open to debate and is an area in which this research seeks to contribute.

<u>Alienation of Muslim communities</u>

Perhaps one of the most prolific criticisms of Prevent is that it has systematically alienated Muslim communities. Numerous academics including Kundnani, Choudhary, Thomas and Lakhani have commented and sought to evidence that the strategy has done more damage to relations between the police and Muslim communities than good. The critics argue that Prevent was destined to fail from the start due to its formation being so grounded in a confused attempt to counter the growing threat of Islamism as oppose to the wider threat of terrorism. Lambert and Glithens-Mazer (2011) seek to explain this development by drawing on the Cantle report (Cantle, 2001) commissioned by the Home Secretary following on from the 2001 '*summer of discontent*' which saw northern cities including Burnley, Oldham and Bradford engulfed by riots; "*These cities were rocked by violence reflecting deep tensions between white working-class and Muslim communities*" They argue that *"the riot's longer term impact has profoundly affected the way that the British government thinks about terrorism and Muslim communities,"* it is claimed that this fed into a wider concentration "*on cohesion, immigration and cultural difference… which in the run-up to the 2001 British general election… were regular topics of heated exchange, with a broadly centre-right appeal on the part of many politicians to condemn the 'perils' of unchecked immigration.*" (Lambert & Glithens-Mazer, 2011, p.1). This shift in focus within British politics was reinforced by the declaration of the global war on terror stemming from 9/11 which specifically targeted Islamic extremism through its focus on Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The link was made that radicalisation stems from poor community cohesion, which in turn stems from lack of integration of

minority communities (in this case Muslim communities). This notion (whether right or wrong) directly influenced political decisions in the early 2000s including the formation of the Prevent Strategy; it was feared that the growing threat of international Islamic extremism, increasing levels of immigration within the UK, and rising tensions between Muslim communities would result in an escalation of violent extremism from British Muslims. Critics such as Hussain claim that this nervous and clouded approach to link the one issue (social cohesion) with another (threat of terrorism) shows that: *"Prevent was quite simply born out of a panic induced confusion/correlation of Islam, with bases for engaging in Islamically inspired political violence."* (Hussain, 2007, p.119).

There has been no attempt by the government to deny the initial focus of the Prevent Strategy on Islamic extremism which it sought to justify by claiming that extremism rooted in Islamic ideology posed the biggest threat to the safety of the UK at the time; "*Prevent should be proportionate and focused. We regard this as particularly important because of the view that the last Prevent Strategy was disproportionate – in particular, that it stigmatised communities, suggested that they were collectively at risk of radicalisation and implied terrorism was a problem specific to Muslim communities.*" (HM Government, 2011, p.40). The concern around its initial anti-Islamic stance was compounded by the lack of transparency around the allocation of Prevent funding which saw the first 30 'priority areas' chosen due to them having Muslim population of over 5% (Thomas, 2012). Whilst there are few who would deny that Islamic extremism was and still is a threat facing the UK, many feel that the way "*this explicit targeting demonstrates that Islamophobia is central in shaping how the government (and wider society) define and construct extremism and terrorism as solely Islamic problems*" and that this "*not only institutionalises, legitimises and reinforces Islamophobia*" (Qurashi, 2016, p.1), but has led to Muslim's being identified as "*the new suspect community*" (Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009, p.17) from which vulnerability to social isolation and thus extremism has actually grown.

The criticisms around Prevent alienating Muslim communities are not limited to its inception. The strategy has undergone numerous reviews over the past decade and claims to have evolved to focus more evenly on all elements of extremism including the extreme right wing. "*On the one hand, this widened strategy has been hailed as a welcome development that goes at least some way towards redressing the perceived imbalance against Muslim communities*", (Baker-Beall et al. 2015, p.123) however many would say that the damage has already been done, and that the added inclusion of right wing extremism was little more than a token gesture to hide the true target of the strategy (Bentley, 2015); *"Although the program is presented as targeting all extremism, including that of the far right, in practice it is almost exclusively applied to Muslims*" (Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2016). The lack of critical review around the strategy and its development during this time has done little to show the strategy as one that considers its impact on vulnerable communities. The 2010 national consultation on Prevent carried out by the Home Office took little more than three months and consisted of just 400 written responses to an online survey and less than 600 people involved in focus groups and discussions (HM Government, 2011c) Given the population of Britain is over 60 million, it is difficult to see this as a genuine attempt to understand the issues around the existing strategy. Whilst the strategy has developed to include additional references to other forms of extremism the emphasis placed on Islamic extremism has not been tempered. Eriksen (2012) argues that the terminology and guidance around the Prevent Strategy wrongly identifies Al-Qaeda inspired terrorism and extreme Islamic ideologies as a threat to which all Muslims are vulnerable to, and seeks to create "*a situation where Muslim communities reject and actively condemn violent extremism and seek to undermine and isolate violent extremists*" (Communities and Local Government, 2007, p.9). This ultimately presents the view that "*all Muslims are expected to play a part in preventing extremism, a demand that is not directed towards other segments of the British population*" (Eriksen, 2012, p.4). This criticism is heightened by Greer (2010) who points out that "*there is not a 'Muslim community in Britain*" (Greer, 2010, p.169), this is something that is often overlooked but is fundamental to the debate; Muslims in Britain have been grouped into a 'community' by the government, media and academics alike to the extent that they are all deemed vulnerable to extremism

regardless of sect, age, culture or any other factor, Prevent has been pushed forward this mentality and as pointed out by the Institute for Policy Research and Development "*Prevent labels all Muslims as potentially at-risk of becoming violent extremists, demonstrating that there is a confusion of Islam and extreme Islamism at the very base of the government's counter terrorism strategy*" (Institute for Policy Research and Development, 2010, p.9). Whether the language around 'Muslim community' is accurate or not is somewhat irrelevant; it's use to many is unhelpful; when it is used in the context of countering extremism within our own populations it creates a fear and perception that all Muslims are dangerous, which is not only wrong but isolates Muslims, the fact that the Prevent Strategy is underpinned by this narrative means that according to some it is destined to fail.

Those such as Innes (2006) and Spalek (2008) point out that despite many claiming that Muslim communities have been alienated by the Prevent Strategy, there is very little quantitative data to support this. Whilst data can show broad trends across populations, it is difficult to gather "*data pointing to the experiences of specific populations within specific locales*" (Spalek, 2008, p.82) due to the resource intensive work and large sample sizes needed. When referring to the issue of trust and confidence in policing amongst the Muslim population, the national data sets simply presents the 'average' Muslim community, and takes no account of age, religious sect, culture and area. Whilst it is understandable that some Muslims may feel targeted and disaffected by the Prevent Strategy, there is no "*strong anti-police position detectable in the mainstream Muslim population*" (Innes et al, 2011, p.75), and in fact analysis of the British Crime Survey data carried out by Innes for his report *Assessing the effects of Prevent Policing 2011* showed that as a whole Muslims in England and Wales actually held higher levels of trust and confidence in police than the general population. This led Innes to conclude that "*counter-terrorism policing is not causing widespread or wholesale disengagement and disenchantment within Muslim communities*" (Innes et al, 2011, p.54). It could also be argued that police forces with an active Prevent agenda, are actually engaging with Muslim communities in a more structured and considered way than those without, and that as a result positive relations are being formed, which are gradually easing the

concerns of some within the community. The impact of Prevent policing on Muslim communities is integral to this study and it is hoped that this research will be able to evidence some of the positive and negative effects of the strategy at least within West Yorkshire.

<u>Prevent and the pre-crime space</u>

One of the more elementary criticisms to the Prevent Strategy and in particular the role of the police within it is that it potentially criminalises vulnerable individuals based solely on their thoughts as oppose to their actions. In 17th century England it was established that no person could be deemed guilty of an offence without evidence of a guilty mind (mens rea) and a guilty action (actus reus). This remains an integral principle within the criminal justice system of England and Wales and essentially means that to prove guilt there must be the intention to commit the crime *and* the action of committing it. When this is translated to extremism critics could argue that the Prevent Strategy criminalises individuals who may have been radicalised based solely on their 'guilty mind' with their being no evidence of a 'guilty action'. Whilst this is technically not true; Prevent activity (or indeed any police activity) would not result in *conviction* without evidence a criminal act being committed, there are instances whereby the response would certainly result in the inevitable labelling of an individual as a criminal or terrorist without trial and ultimate determination of guilt through the courts, meaning that the ethical concerns of police involvement in the 'pre-crime' space are valid nonetheless. Measures such as the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs) which can be put in place based solely on reasonable belief and without trial, to restrict the freedoms of somebody suspected of being involved in terrorism, potentially go against basic principles of human rights including freedom of expression and the presumption of innocence. The frequent introduction of new crime categories related to the Prevent Strategy such as the encouragement of terrorism (s.1 Terrorism Act, 2006) has also resulted in an increase in 'acts' which individuals can now find themselves guilty of. Advocates of civil liberties such as Cummings (2010) would suggest that the Government is gradually creating unnecessary legislation and new powers in an attempt to combat terrorism but at the expense of civil liberties, *"we already have criminal law to deal with terrorism, hate*

speech and the incitement of violence, so all that's left for these new proposals to ban are people and views that the Government disagrees with" (Robinson, 2016, p.1). These fears are compounded further when related to Prevent, as by definition those identified and "supported" through the Prevent Strategy are vulnerable to radicalisation, but have not yet committed any criminal acts. Those defending the strategy and indeed any preventative policy would argue that the strategy does not seek to demonise these individuals but aims to divert them away from terrorism before they get to the stage of committing a 'guilty act' by which point it is often too late for them and others they may harm. Furthermore, it could be argued that the vast majority of Prevent activity is actually focused on providing support, safeguarding and diversionary options alongside intervention providers, community members and other partners, and that it is only when concerns are raised around actual criminal activity does the Pursue activity take over. That said the previous criticisms outlined above relating to police involvement in Prevent often means that the very presence of the police near an individual vulnerable to extremism gives the impression of criminality which is a challenge that the police must overcome if they are to continue involvement within the strategy, perhaps by passing over more responsibility to more suitable partner agencies.

Regardless of the legal terminology around criminalisation and the perception of police involvement, the criticism that Prevent and indeed the term 'extremism' demonises those with radical views is still a strong one; Sabir (2016) argues that *"there is no empirical evidence to prove a correlation between ideology and violence, but that is what Prevent is based on – an unverifiable, flawed premise."* (Sabir, 2016, p.1). The success of the Prevent Strategy, particularly with regards to increasing the involvement of partners in its delivery, is pinned on frontline practitioners and members of the public identifying signs of vulnerability which are often no more than uncomfortable comments which could potentially indicate a more sinister ideology; "*Local authorities will be expected to ensure appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to deal with this issue".* (HM Government, 2011, p.7). Organisations focused on protecting human rights claim that this is a clear impeachment on the

freedom of expression which is enshrined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights; *"everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."* (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2011, p.43) goes on to argue that the risk with Prevent is not just limited to breaching human rights but that it is actually contributing to radicalisation by *"creating an atmosphere of self-censorship – where young people don't feel free to express themselves in schools, or youth clubs or at the mosque. If they feel angry, or have a sense of injustice but nowhere to engage in a democratic process and in a peaceful way, then that's the worst climate to create for terrorist recruitment."* (Khaleeli, 2015, p.1).

Claims that the Prevent Strategy (and indeed other counter terrorism policies) breach the European Convention on Human Rights are often dismissed through section 2 of the same article which includes exceptions to the freedom; *"the exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals…"* (Article 10, ECHR). With the inference being that this policy and accompanying measures introduced to prevent extremism are in the interests of national security, public safety the prevention of crime and for the protection of health. This does not negate the worries and trepidation of those such as Liberty who feel that *"powers to radically curb free speech will be placed in the hands of ministers who paint their political opponents as extremists and threats to national security"* but that *"the fact that the Government is still struggling to define the 'extremism' they want to ban should be a clear indication that this legislation [counter terrorism legislation] has no place in a liberal democracy".* (Robinson, 2016, p.1). Essentially any legislation which seems to impede on a basic human right will attract challenge (and rightly so).

This research does not seek to (nor would it be able to) determine the appropriate balance between protection of the public and the rights of the individual, however what it will do, is provide a greater understanding of Prevent activity, how and why individuals are identified as vulnerable, and what the police do to support these individuals by preventing the vulnerability from manifesting into more harmful behaviour. In doing so it will provide additional data to inform those who seek to criticise or legitimise the Prevent Strategy.

Summary

This chapter has drawn on literature to set out the key discussions around community policing principles, the threat of radicalisation, how and why the UK government has sought to tackle this through the Prevent Strategy, and what the role of the police has been within it. Although many debate the concept of radicalisation and dispute its causal link to terrorist acts, the government chose to pin their efforts of stopping terrorism on the principle of stopping radicalisation, and stopping radicalisation through community policing. Believing that radicalisation could stem from poor community cohesion, social isolation and divisive religious ideologies, the Prevent Strategy was formed with the fundamental objectives of engaging with communities to build resilience and supporting those vulnerable to the influence of harmful narratives. The literature review has found a wealth of information relating to the research aims and specifically information which helps to justify the heavy focus on community engagement within the Prevent Strategy; essentially the premise stands that good community policing can lead to improved community cohesion, in turn, strong community cohesion, can help prevent extremism, therefore good community policing can help prevent terrorism.

This literature review has also shown that there is a disparity between the theory behind the Prevent Strategy and how it is delivered in practice. The police were never intended to be the lead agency delivering the Prevent strategy, but perhaps out of fear, necessity or habit, the police were commissioned to guide local authorities and other key partners to the areas of most need through the information or

intelligence that they held around 'vulnerable' individuals and communities, and to build up links within these communities through traditional community policing principles. Perhaps a lack of information sharing and governance processes, have resulted in the police maintaining the lead on the Prevent Strategy despite much of the academic literature and political intention insisting on a shift to more suitable partner agencies. The role of the police within the Prevent Strategy continues to be more prominent than intended or than the majority would like to see and is a key source of criticism. The Prevent Duty will go some way to shifting the onus back on to partner organisations but there is a worry that the Home Office have given the instruction without first putting in place the governance and accountability framework to do so. This relatively new development within the Prevent Strategy will take some time to become reality and it will be interesting to see how central government responds to those who do not or cannot take up the mantel. In the meantime, much of the Prevent Strategy will continue to be led by the police, who themselves are seeking to develop a more safeguarding focused approach to the Strategy. This may in time help to overcome some of the mistrust and denunciations which stem from the initial allegedly Islamaphobic version of the Prevent Strategy which continues to mar its reputation amongst many academics and communities alike. Similarly it would in theory help to challenge the criticisms around the involvement of Pursue tactics within the strategy by better illustrating the risk and thus the need to investigate. Whether the police seek to do so through utilising safeguarding mechanisms, more open and transparent communications, relinquishing responsibilities to partners, or through the increased utilisation of NPTs, will have a direct impact on the success of the Prevent Strategy as a whole. The rest of this thesis will look closely at what the current role of the neighbourhood policing in Prevent is in practice and will compare this against what the literature, government policies and communities believe their role should be.

Prevent in practice

Perhaps one of the most interesting and useful case studies to help understand Prevent in practice is that of the Munshi brothers from Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. In 2008 Hammaad Munshi was the youngest

person to be convicted of terrorist offences in Britain aged just 18. He is thought to have become radicalised and subsequently involved in a known terror cell from the age of 15 and was arrested in 2006, later being sentenced to two years in a Young Offenders Institute for possessing article(s) for a purpose connected with terrorism. In early 2015, Hammaad's younger brother Hassan travelled to Syria with his childhood friend and next door neighbour Tahla Asmal both aged 17. Reports later identified Tahla as Britain's youngest suicide bomber after taking part in a coordinated Daesh attack against an oil refinery in Northern Iraq. Hassan's whereabouts is currently unknown, however, it is believed that he is involved in the fighting somewhere in Syria, and he too would be convicted under counter-terrorism laws should he ever return to the UK. What is interesting about this case study is not that two brothers had been radicalised, but that second brother had apparently been radicalised after the 'rehabilitation' of the first. Following Hammaad's conviction and subsequent release from custody, attention on Britain's youngest terrorist and his family did not diminish; the local Prevent teams working closely with the police, probation service and other local authorities continued to engage (Ahmed, 2015) with the Munshi family in order to support them in line with the aims of the strategy and wider safeguarding efforts. Furthermore the brothers' Grandfather a leading Islamic Scholar and Imam in the local Mosque had been a prominent public figure in the fight against extremism since before Hammaad's arrest in 2006 and had continued working with local authorities and the community on these issues. Unfortunately much of the discussion around the brothers has been side-tracked by those wanting to identify the people who had radicalised the brothers; questions have been raised around the sincerity of Hammaad's reform and the possibility that the two brother's had been radicalised from within the family despite the official police response stating that the brothers were each radicalised online. But in many ways the force driving their radicalisation is somewhat irrelevant to this study; it is not important whether they were radicalised online, by each other, or by a family member, what is important here, is that the Prevent Strategy had been implemented following the conviction of the first brother but had apparently failed to prevent the second from being drawn into violent extremism ten years later. This begs the question, can the Prevent Strategy stop vulnerable people being drawn into extremism and what is the role of the police within this.

<u>Research questions</u>

To summarise, this literature review has provided the basis for understanding existing discussions related to the research area. To recap the research aimed to:

- investigate the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy.

- understand the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy.

- Ascertain whether NPTs should and could be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy.

Chapter two will outline the methodologies chosen to achieve these aims and the justification for these decisions.

Chapter two

Methodology Overview

To achieve the aims of this research this thesis will explore policies and practices related to counter terrorism, local policing strategies, partnership working arrangements, radicalisation and community confidence. Due to the sensitivities around the topics covered and the restrictions of information sharing imposed on the agencies concerned; this research could not rely on the supply of data from the government organisations instead this thesis includes a heavy focus on data generated by a number of different research methods.

Justifying a Case Study approach

Whilst Prevent is a national strategy and extremism a threat to all areas, it was not considered a practical undertaking for this research to approach this on a national level due to the scale and differences in police practice across the 43 forces of England and Wales. As the fundamental research aims centre around policing practice at neighbourhood level it was decided that one police force would provide the appropriate scale and coverage of Prevent and local policing within communities for this research. West Yorkshire was identified as a suitable region to focus this research on. The county is policed by West Yorkshire Police the 3rd largest police force in England and Wales (outside of London) and in addition to this West Yorkshire is also home to the North East Counter Terrorism Unit (NECTU) one of four regional counter terrorism units in the country. Over 2.3 million people from diverse backgrounds reside in West Yorkshire, spread over five districts each governed by a local authority. Of these five districts three were categorised by the Home Office as Prevent Priority Areas (at the time of planning) which afforded them a higher level of funding and resource from central government to tackle what it describes as being "*at higher risk of extremist activity*" (Coker, 2015, p.25). The other two districts were considered lower risk but were still categorised as 'supported areas'. Whilst other geographical areas may have offered the research more uniformity in how policing is delivered both generally and in relation to Prevent. It was

considered an advantage for this research that one police force covered such a diverse area with varying degrees of risk to radicalisation and the resulting response from the police and partners. Consideration was given to using just one of the districts such as Leeds which in itself is larger than some entire police forces and provided a good level of demographic diversity across its population, however it was deemed that due to slight variances in policing structures and practices across districts, focusing on just one district would not allow the research to make valid conclusions about the state of Prevent or neighbourhood policing as a whole.

Prior to selecting West Yorkshire as the base for this research, other force areas including London (The Metropolitan Police Service) and West Midlands Police were considered. Like West Yorkshire, these two police forces have strong links to preventing violent extremism and also covered a range of diverse communities, they were all heavily involved in the PVE Pathfinder fund, have proven track records for implementing counter-extremism policies and have a high proportion of Prevent Priority areas. In addition to West Yorkshire's unique mix of priority areas and position within the NECTU, there were other qualities which made it a suitable basis for study into the delivery of Prevent policing. West Yorkshire has deep-seated links to Prevent stemming from the 7/7 terror attacks in London due to the fact that the bombers originated from West Yorkshire. The previous Chief Constable between 2007-2013 (a formative time for the Prevent Strategy) was also the ACPO[5] lead for Prevent and was also a vocal advocate of the Neighbourhood Policing Model. As a result, West Yorkshire Police often pioneered various aspects of the Prevent Strategy and sought opportunities to more closely link the two policing purposes which are of relevance to this research. The force continues to prioritise neighbourhood policing and countering violent extremism as evidenced in the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2016-21 and the Chief Constable's Policing Strategy 2017. When approached during the preliminary exploration stage of this research, West Yorkshire Police, NECTU and the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner each

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[5] ACPO – The Association of Chief Police Officers was replaced by the NPCC – The National Police Chiefs' Council in April 2015.

welcomed the opportunity to support research into this area and have been actively engaged in the research throughout.

Justifying the Case Studies selected

For the purposes of this research a number of case studies were required to provide an understanding of policing practice across West Yorkshire. Utilising case studies in research allows for in depth investigation into a group, scenario or population in a way that has clear boundaries to assist with management of resources; *"the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena."* (Yin, 2013, p.4). West Yorkshire Police is made up of over 9,000 people and is broken down across five[6] geographical districts and 37 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs). Approaching this research from a 'West Yorkshire wide' perspective would not have been a realistic undertaking for PhD research nor would it have allowed the level of in depth focused study into policing at neighbourhood level within vulnerable communities. It was therefore decided that a number of NPTs across West Yorkshire Police would be identified as case studies to ensure that the fieldwork was designed to a manageable standard whilst allowing an accurate reflection of Prevent, communities and Policing across the region is encapsulated. The case study participants (police officers and staff from the chosen NPTs) would be actively involved in the research by providing information and data via a range of methodologies including interviews and activity reports as detailed later.

The first step in identifying suitable NPTs to use as case studies was to decide how many case studies would be needed. It was crucial to strike a balance between getting a broad range of data which gives a true indication of all of West Yorkshire whilst allowing the researcher to dedicate enough time to each

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[6] When this research commenced West Yorkshire Police was structured into eight divisions. However plans were in place to change to a five district model prior to the fieldwork starting. As such all fieldwork was planned around the five district structure of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield.

case study so that the information gathered is credible, worthwhile and detailed enough to allow for in depth analysis. As research aim two is fundamentally pinned on assessing of the role that NPTs within West Yorkshire play in preventing radicalisation through community engagement, it was crucial that the case studies reflected the diverse environments within which the NPTs were operating. Research aim three required an understanding of whether or not NPTs are able to adapt their style of neighbourhood policing to additional vulnerabilities to extremism within communities, and so it was essential that the case studies also covered a range of different 'vulnerable communities'.[7] Finally a fundamental principle of community policing is that local officers respond to local issues in a way that the local community requires, this translates in practice to NPTs adapting their policing response depending on the need, meaning that it was also crucial that the case studies included at least one area with no additional vulnerability for comparative purposes. These considerations meant that the bare minimum number of NPT case studies needed for this research was two; one which policed a vulnerable community and one that did not. However using only two case studies, would not be sufficient in ensuring a reflective indication of policing across West Yorkshire nor would it have allowed for the collation of enough data to draw valid conclusions. Consideration was given to the validity of having one NPT case study per district which would equate to five in total, however during initial enquiries a number of logistical issues became apparent.

NPTs (at the time of the fieldwork) operated on a three week shift cycle, therefore the researcher would ideally have needed to be in direct contact with each case study at least once every three weeks to discuss any issues, observe, take feedback and gather data. If five case studies were used, the researcher would need to attend around two visits to different locations across West Yorkshire every week, this would have been unmanageable for part-time study in addition to personal and work

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[7] The term vulnerable community is used throughout this research to denote communities which are considered to potentially be vulnerable to extremism or the influence of extremists. The process for deciding this is documented later in this chapter.

commitments given the time needed for travel, analysis of results, writing up and further research. Consideration was then given to using four case studies; logically the best way to achieve a representative spread across West Yorkshire Police would have been to ensure that they are in separate districts to determine a stratified sample, however this would also have meant excluding one district. Initial concerns regarding this option were hinged on the fact that each district was structured slightly differently and corresponded to a different local authority, therefore the research may have missed valuable insights. Although all districts are in the same police force, there is some discretion to implement certain policies and practices in slightly different ways depending on the need. However preliminary research also revealed that for Prevent purposes, the districts were grouped according to demand; Leeds and Bradford were each allocated a Detective Sergeant and prioritised equally, whilst Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield were all managed under one Sergeant and were often resourced in a similar manner. During the planning stages of the fieldwork, Bradford and Leeds were also the only districts within West Yorkshire to be deemed priority areas, although Kirklees followed suit soon after, at the same time Calderdale became a supported area, whilst Wakefield remained unclassified. It was concluded that although there was a slight risk that certain community issues may have been missed by excluding one of the districts, four case studies was enough to allow for a broad view across the spectrum of Prevent delivery within West Yorkshire whilst maintaining the level of focus and data quality required.

The selection of the four NPT case studies was based on two connected sets of criteria referred to as the 'overall criteria' and the 'vulnerability criteria' which were developed for this purpose. The general criteria ensured that the NPTs would be suitable as a collective set of case studies, whilst the vulnerability criteria focused on ensuring that the NPTs selected would be able to add value to the research. However, before the researcher decided to identify case studies by devising their own criteria a number of other options were considered including relying on West Yorkshire Police and NECTU to provide the details of communities which they have already identified as vulnerable, focus less on geographical locations of communities and instead approach it from a cultural sense, or carry out analysis of where Prevent teams

operate and target highest areas. Each of these had their own strengths and weaknesses however mainly for the purposes of impartiality it was decided that establishing tailored criteria would be the more robust approach.

<u>Overall Case Study Criteria</u>

The choice of case study was crucial; in choosing four NPTs out of a possible 37 the research simply could not rely on a random selection as although this may have given a level of impartiality to the research the risk of selecting NPTs which covered no vulnerable communities or were all in the same districts would be too high to justify. Instead a seven-point criteria was devised based on necessary considerations for the fieldwork from which the case studies were selected:

1. *All of the NPTs must be in <u>different districts</u> across West Yorkshire Police.*

2. *At least two of the NPTs must cover communities that have been identified as <u>vulnerable</u> to extremism.*

3. *At least one of the NPTs must cover a community that is identified as vulnerable to <u>Islamic</u> extremism.*

4. *At least one of the NPTs must cover a community which is vulnerable to a <u>different</u> type of extremism.*

5. *At least one of the NPTs must cover a community which is <u>not</u> identified as vulnerable to extremism.*

6. *At least two of the NPTs must have a <u>Prevent Team</u> working alongside them.*

7. *All of the NPTs must be able and willing to <u>cooperate</u> with research.*

From this criteria the case studies selected will essentially reflect the following:

Table 1. Case study general criteria

Case Study 1	*NPT covers an area vulnerable to Islamic extremism.*
Case Study 2	*NPT covers a community vulnerable to a different form of extremism to case study 1.*
Case Study 3	*NPT covers a community vulnerable to a different form of extremism to above*
Case Study 4	*NPT covers an area not deemed to be vulnerable to any form of extremism.*

The most important aspect which dictated which NPTs should be selected for case studies was the local community's vulnerability to extremism. In order to accurately identify these communities, a secondary criteria was established which identified factors which could represent vulnerabilities and will be presented later however this section will first provide the explanation and justification for this.

1. All of the NPTs must be in different districts of West Yorkshire.

As discussed above; it was crucial that the case studies reflect the particularly diverse environments within which the NPTs in West Yorkshire were working. It was clear to see when comparing the official 'Local Community Priorities' of neighbourhoods in different areas within West Yorkshire (or even within the same city), that one NPT might be dealing with very different issues and daily duties than another. When the delicate issue of policing terrorism was concerned it became even more important to ensure that any analysis of police practices provided a fair representation of what was happening across the force.

2. At least two of the NPTs must cover communities that have been identified as vulnerable to extremism.

As a fundamental aspect of this research was based on evaluating how NPTs engage with the communities in their 'beats' which could have been vulnerable to extremism, it was crucial that the some of the NPTs studied, covered such communities. If not the research would have been limited to assessing NPT engagement with 'typical communities' and there would be no comparative value for analysis against the implementation of the Prevent Strategy across policing. The process of identifying communities which may be vulnerable to extremism is set out under the 'vulnerability criteria' and will be presented next.

3. At least one of the above NPTs must cover a community that is identified as vulnerable to Islamic extremism.

The logic behind this criteria was two-fold; firstly Islamic extremism was a prominent threat to the UK at the time of planning (CPNI, 2013), and secondly the Prevent Strategy (although not solely for Islamic

extremism) was designed in response to the rise of home-grown Islamic extremism and radicalisation *"Although there is serious work to be done in relation to Northern Ireland-related terrorism and extreme right-wing terrorism, the bulk of current activity is in relation to Islamist extremism"* (Carlile, 2011, p.4). For these reasons it seemed pertinent to ensure that one of the case studies is an NPT which covered a community vulnerable to Islamic extremism. Furthermore, there had been an abundance of reporting regarding the view that Prevent targeted and isolated the Muslim communities therefore it would be interesting to the research to understand any differences in policing practice towards Muslim communities.

4. At least one of the above NPTs must cover a community which is vulnerable to a different type of extremism.

In order to get a broad perspective of Prevent and community engagement within West Yorkshire it was crucial to assess NPTs which cover communities with different vulnerabilities to Islamic extremism. This enabled a deeper understanding of Prevent and community engagement and whether more could be done to ensure that Prevent can be tailored to suit the needs of individual communities. Moreover, as so much research to date has been focused on whether the Muslim communities are targeted and alienated by the Prevent Strategy, utilising NPTs in different communities could help to confirm or negate these claims.

5. At least one of the NPTs must not cover a community which is identified as vulnerable to extremism.

The decision to ensure that at least one of the NPTs did not police a community vulnerable to extremism was based on the need to assess if there is a difference between the engagement with 'typical communities' and 'vulnerable communities' but also provides comparative value with regards to the preparedness of all NPTs to be included in the mainstreaming of Prevent. One aspect of the research is to assess the training and guidance given to NPTs regarding Prevent therefore it would be valuable to

see whether this is different in NPTs operating in priority areas. The same comparisons will be carried out in relation to structures, resources, and partnership working arrangements.

6. At least two of the NPTs must have a Prevent team working alongside them.

It was fundamental to identify any working links between Prevent teams and NPTs; this would not only help to identify the current function of NPTs within the Prevent delivery (research aim two), but would also inform the discussion around whether the mainstreaming of Prevent across NPTs would be viable with regards to practicality, logistics and working relationships.

7. All of the NPTs must be willing and able to cooperate with research.

The final criteria was both an ethical consideration as well as a practical concern. In order for the research to include ethical research using human sources (interviews, observations etc.) the consent of all of the participants was needed. Similarly the accuracy and effectiveness of the research depended largely on those involved being able and willing to partake; there would be a level of responsibility placed on each participant which was explained in depth first to ensure that they were aware and happy to commit to. To ensure this the researcher gained permission from the Police Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable on behalf of all of West Yorkshire Police, and also spoke to and gained consent from every individual involved in the research in accordance with standard guidelines.

‘Vulnerability’ criteria

One of the key requirements of the research was to analyse how NPTs engage with the vulnerable communities in their local area, therefore it was crucial that such communities could be identified to inform the case study selection process. The initial step in identifying communities vulnerable to extremism was to review a range of guidance on the subject from both professional and academic arenas which highlight the ‘key characteristics’ or ‘impact factors’ which *may* make a community vulnerable to extremism. Comprehensive reports from the OSCT, and the National Community Tension Team (NCTT) along with

academic literature relating not only the vulnerability of communities but of individuals too were utilised to inform the criteria with what are commonly accepted as main factors of vulnerability. These are outlined in Chapter one – Literature Review within the wider discussion relating to radicalisation and the internal and external factors which can contribute to radicalisation and vulnerability to extremist influence. Following this review of the key literature on vulnerability factors a list of criteria was established; for the purpose of this research it was decided that vulnerable communities would be identified as having <u>most or all</u> of the following:

- Poor community cohesion in the local area.
- Significant number of people who follow the same or similar ideology in the locality.
- History of local community tensions.
- Historic or current mistrust of the Police or Authority notable in community.
- High levels of deprivation and disillusion
- Links to international struggles or conflicts.
- Prominent controversial individual or group active in that area.
- Abundance of community meeting points.
- Notable levels of signal crimes.

Once this criteria had been established and tested, the next step was to identify and apply data from a range of different sources to ensure that the case studies were not influenced by one particular organisation or set of statistics. After extensive searching and liaison with different organisations a list of possible data sources was drafted against each of the criteria. Whilst other data sources could also provide valid indications, it was deemed important to focus more on official data sets and organisations to give a level of legitimacy to the information provided and the subsequent case study selection. The below data collection table illustrates where the information was available from, full references can be found in the bibliography.

Table 2. Data sources for case study vulnerability criteria

Characteristic	Police – NPT	NECTU	NCTT	Home Office	Council / LA	Schools	Community	Media
Poor community cohesion in that area			X		X	X	X	
Significant number of people of same ethnicity or who follow the same ideology		X	X	X	X	X	X	
History of local community tensions	X	X	X		X		X	
Historic or current mistrust of the Police or Authority notable in community.	X		X		X		X	X
High levels of deprivation and disillusion			X	X	X		X	X
Links to international struggles or conflicts		X	X	X				X
Prominent controversial individuals or groups active in that area	X	X		X	X		X	X
Abundance of Community Meeting Points	X		X		X	X	X	
Notable level of signal crimes	X		X	X	X		X	X

Case Study Selection

Once the criteria had been decided, it was applied in the most efficient way, beginning with the more specific vulnerable criteria, consideration was then given to each requirement in isolation by applying the relevant data and compiling a list of suitable options which would then be cross referenced against the general criteria. The results were as follows:

Case Study 1 - Vulnerable to Islamic extremism

Significant number of people who follow the same or similar ideology in the locality - Islamic

As mentioned above one of the case studies needed to be an NPT which covered a community which was identified as being *vulnerable to Islamic extremism.* Identifying extremist influences within communities of any sort is naturally difficult and potentially any community within West Yorkshire or indeed the UK, could be vulnerable to extremism (Islamic or otherwise). As such it was logical to attempt to narrow down the initial search area by looking first at communities which had a higher Muslim population. This is not to say that these communities *were* vulnerable to Islamic extremism, just that they *could* be more vulnerable, as Islamic extremists were more likely to target people within these

communities to recruit and radicalise. To do this a range of existing and reliable data bases such as the 2011 Census (Office of National Statistics) which incidentally was the first census to include a survey of religion was utilised. The census showed that the largest population of people identifying as Muslim in West Yorkshire was Bradford with 129,041 registering Islam as their religion, in comparison Leeds had 40,772, Kirklees had 61,280, Calderdale 14,802 and Wakefield had 6,475. (Office of National Statistics, Table QS210, 2011 Census). Although the exact numbers cited in the 2011 census may have changed slightly by 2014 when the fieldwork commenced, for the purpose of this research it acted as a valid indication that Bradford had a far larger population of Muslim people than any of the other districts in West Yorkshire. For this reason it was decided that it would be justifiable to use Bradford as the basis for the search for a community which is vulnerable to Islamic extremism.

History of Local Community Tensions

The next step was to look at the other aspects of the vulnerability criteria to narrow the results down 'further, one of which is '*a history of local community tensions'*; Perhaps the most prominent example of this in West Yorkshire was in Bradford was the Bradford Riots in 2001, which despite affecting the entire city did have 'hot spots' or 'flash points' where the disorder was worst, such as Manningham, Toller Lane and Sticker Lane. These areas have often been referred to as a racial tinderbox (The Guardian, 2011) and place of hostile segregation (Buhler. et, al, 2002) owing largely to the riots. From this it was clear that these areas met this criteria perfectly, furthermore it was difficult to think of anywhere in West Yorkshire that would be more suitable.

Poor Community Cohesion

Similarly it was also fair to suggest that these areas ticked the box of having poor community cohesion. Following the Bradford riots, the city became the focus of a number of reviews including the Cantle and Ouseley Reports (2001), the aim of these reports were to understand the causes to prevent repeat occurrences; both reports concluded that poor community cohesion was the underlying cause of the

disorder. Subsequent studies and follow ups showed that despite some pockets of good practice, little progress had been made in the area to improve cohesion; "*the key concern in the District is that relationships between different cultural communities should be improving, but instead they are deteriorating*" (Ouseley, 2001, p.6). Reporting from the National Community Tension Team (NCTT) in 2014 further corroborated that community cohesion in these three areas of Bradford was still weak and an indicator table published by *Bradford: Stronger communities,* showed that Manningham was the worst area in Bradford for residents feeling that they get along with people from different backgrounds, followed again by Toller. Bowling and Barkerend ward scored higher but was still below the national average. Therefore the criteria for poor community cohesion is met in all of these areas.

Prominent controversial individual or groups that may be active in that area

Following this process the number of potential vulnerable communities for the first case study was narrowed down to three locations covered by two NPTs. It was then possible to identify *prominent controversial individual or groups that may be active in that area*. The wording of this criteria was intentionally designed to ensure that no communities or groups would be accused of extremism or terrorist offences. Instead it was designed to include groups that may unintentionally provoke extreme views through discussing controversial subjects as well as those that are proscribed in the UK. Such an example may be Hizb ut-Tahrir which is an organisation that is not violent and has no clear links to any terrorist group, however has caused controversy over its calls for an Islamic Caliphate, its racial hatred particularly against Jews and its refusal to condemn the 7/7 bombers (The Guardian, 2006; The National Union of Students, 2008; Cameron, 2007). To continue with this example, this group was prominent in Bradford and had held meetings in all four communities in the two years prior to the case study selection, (Hizb-ut-tahrir Britain, 2011) its messages could potentially be interpreted as extremist and could contribute to the radicalisation of a vulnerable individual, thus it met the required criteria.

Links to international struggles or conflicts

This refers to the 'Global to Local adage' which is often used to illustrate how communities are affected by international events. With regards to the *links to international struggles or conflicts* it would be fair to say that this criteria would have been met by any of the potential vulnerable communities which have been identified so far. This is due to the fact that in the current international climate there is an abundance of conflicts involving Muslim states all over the world for example Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Egypt, Algeria, Indonesia etc. Granted there are many different sects of Islam to consider but ultimately by default every community identified in this process so far had Islam in common thus shared similar connections to the international situations involving their fellow Muslims, although their personal views on the conflicts may differ, the links were undeniable and thus this criteria was also met. Moreover, Bradford had one of the highest Bangladeshi populations within all of the UK with a percentage of 1.89% which was more than double the national average. The civil conflict in Bangladesh regarding the execution of Bangladeshi Muslim Leaders was ongoing at the time of selection and had divided the Bangladeshi Muslim community, provided another example of how local communities can be influenced by international events. It was noted that the areas of Bradford which had the highest concentration of Bangladeshi Muslims were again, Manningham (highest at over 6%) (West Yorkshire Observatory, 2011), followed by Bowling & Barkerend and Toller which were all close behind.

Abundance of community meeting points

Similarly a mapping search using any open source facility would show *an abundance of community meeting points* in each of these three areas, such as Mosques, Madrassas, restaurants, book shops, community centres etc. therefore none were ruled out at this stage either. If a more in depth analysis of the number, type and risk level of each location were required this would have been easily be completed based on further open source mapping, media reporting and community contact.

To conclude the process above identified two NPTs Manningham, and Bowling & Barkerend. In this instance both of the potential areas case studies met the criteria for vulnerability equally and so both were deemed suitable options. Their corresponding NPTs were put forward against the general criteria and one was chosen as case study one (Islamic Extremism), this final stage of the process is outlined later.

Case Study 2 – Vulnerable to a Different type of Extremism (Not in Bradford)

According to the requirements of the general case study selection criteria the 2nd case study chosen could not be in Bradford (as the fieldwork needs to be spread across West Yorkshire) and should cover a community which is vulnerable to a different type of extremism. To identify suitable options, a similar process as outlined above was followed but a different criteria was utilised to narrow down the initial area of research in order to identify different potentially vulnerable communities.

Links to international struggles or conflicts

Links to international struggles or conflicts was the initial criteria used as the starting point. It was fair to assume given the range of international conflicts that were ongoing and the diverse ethnic, cultural and religious group that they relate to, that this would identify a number of differing potential communities to then look at in more detail. For an initial indication of what was going on in the international arena world media was used as a reference. A quick recap over the international political issues of the previous 12 months provided a list of conflicts or issues which could have impacted on related communities within the UK and links to extremism. A brief summary of the top 10 most featured political issues was as follows; Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Mali, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland, Egypt, and Algeria etc. Using these as a basis for further elimination the consideration was then given to the following; did any of these struggles involve non-Islamic extremist groups and did any of these have links to a prominent community in West Yorkshire (excluding Bradford)? The first question initially ruled out most of these; Somalia's main issues surrounded Al–Shabaab, a Muslim group which aims to enforce Shariah Law, Afghanistan involved the Taliban and Al-Qaeda which were two of the most prolific Islamic terrorist

organisations, Palestine's struggle was headed by and linked to groups such as the PLO, Al-Qaeda, Hamas etc. and focus on driving out Zionism, the struggles in Egypt were also heavily directed by groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood which has suspicious yet tenuous links to Islamic terrorism, finally Mali and Algeria were predominately Muslim countries which were struggling to drive out Muslim extremist control. This left three; Kurdistan, Israel and Northern Ireland, although there were Islamic extremist elements to the conflicts in Israel the main population was Jewish and the issues were predominately linked to nationalism, human rights and political revolution, not Islamic extremism. Ultimately the process narrowed down a large collection of communities linked to International struggle and extremism to just three for further scrutiny.

Significant number of people who follow the same or similar ideology in the locality
The next question to ask was whether any of these have well represented communities in West Yorkshire (excluding Bradford). Just like in the search for a community vulnerable to Islamic extremism resources such as the 2011 census were used to gather data on population figures to support this query.

Starting with the Israeli struggle; Leeds had the highest population of Jewish people in West Yorkshire by far (6,847 with Bradford next highest with just 299). (Office of National Statistics, 2011 Census, table KS209EW). This meant that if specific neighbourhoods with a high Jewish population and links to controversial groups could be located in specific neighbourhoods then one of the case studies could in theory be chosen based on Jewish extremism.

Looking at Kurdistan next; the 2011 census showed that Leeds has the highest population of Kurdish people with 1,461, the next highest (not including Bradford at 1,037) is Kirklees with 737 which still shows a clear indication that if choosing Kurdish communities for a case study Leeds would be the logical choice.

Northern Ireland was the last conflict identified above for possibly providing a vulnerable community; there were 3,390 Northern-Ireland born people in Leeds, 1,362 in Bradford, 1,167 in Kirklees, 808 in Wakefield and 732 in Calderdale.

From analysis of the three related populations it was clear that regardless of which one selected the case study would be in Leeds as it had the highest number of all of the districts regardless of which ideology. However, it was crucial to then narrow these three communities down to more geographically specific areas related to NPTs from which case study two could be based on.

In doing this one key problem became apparent specifically with Northern Irish communities; ultimately although figures on Northern Irish People in West Yorkshire were easy to locate based on place of birth, narrowing this down to certain community areas was more difficult as the Northern Irish Diaspora in West Yorkshire is much more spread as oppose to localised in specific areas. This effectively meant that a specific Northern Irish community (which would be covered by an NPT) would be very difficult to locate. With Kurdish and Jewish communities there was no such problem; In general Kurdish and Jewish diasporas were much more concentrated into smaller areas and communities had a characteristic of being very close-knit and visible in the towns where they resided. It has been suggested that this is because of their business-driven culture or in the case of the Kurdish; a desire to promote Kurdistan as a legitimate nationality following decades of persecution. This speculation was somewhat corroborated through local knowledge and looking through business directories and city council maps by which it became fairly easy to identify that the places with a prominent Kurdish population were Lincoln Green, Roundhay and Harehills. Similar methods were used to show that there was also a high concentration of Jewish people in Leeds areas such as Moortown, Lidgett and Moor Allerton, incidentally all of these communities fall under two neighbouring NPTs; Burmantofts & Richmond Hill and Roundhay Alwoodley & Moortown. To conclude on this point although further work would have been necessary to pursue Northern Irish communities as a legitimate option, at this stage it appeared that Kurdish and Jewish

communities meet the criteria of "*Significant number of people who follow the same or similar ideology in the locality*".

Prominent controversial individual or group active in that area.

Although both of these initially seemed to provide valid options there was one key problem with Jewish communities which was that ultimately Jewish Extremism was not deemed significant threat in the UK (or indeed anywhere outside of the Middle East). This ultimately meant that although there were prominent Jewish communities they would probably not be vulnerable to extremism as there were no active extremist groups to which they could be vulnerable. Kurdish communities on the other hand compared better with this criteria. Not only were there active groups such as the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) (White, 2015), but the issues surrounding Kurdistan as a legitimate nationality (it is a geographical area which spreads across the borders of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran) meant that these communities would potentially also have links to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as well as the struggle for Kurdish independence, ultimately creating an interesting point of research. Similarly with Northern Irish communities in Mainland UK there was the ever present influence of the organisations involved in the troubles; The IRA, PIRA, UVF, etc. therefore it was not felt that meeting this criteria would be an issue if Northern Irish communities were pursued as a possible Vulnerable Community on which to base a case study.

Notable level of signal crimes

Finally the last criteria in identifying a vulnerable community was also satisfied; *notable level of signal crimes*". Signal crimes include hate crime such as racially aggravated crime, anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and vandalism, violent crime etc. There is a range of published information available for mapping these crimes such as the British Crime Survey, the Census and the new Police Crime Website where the public can interactively view the crimes in their area. As such the task of analysing this information and comparing it to other areas was relatively straightforward. The statistics from 2012 show

that Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ranked 3rd out of its 10 closest (geographically) NPTs with regards to these signal crimes (UK Crime statistics, 2013).

Ultimately in using *Links to international conflicts or struggles* and *Significant number of people who follow the same or similar ideology in the locality* as a starting point to focus the initial scope of research two further communities were identified as being potentially vulnerable communities and thus corresponding NPTs which upon cross-reference against the general criteria could have be chosen as the 2nd case study. Due to the fact that Kurdish communities appeared to be much more suitable with regards to the practicality of assessing conventional Prevent engagement than Northern Irish communities, the decision was taken to progress with the Kurdish communities only.

Case Study 3 – Vulnerable to a Different type of Extremism (Not in Bradford or Leeds)

Wakefield was ruled out as an option as for the location of this case study as it was felt that it would provide a better basis for the final case study choice; *an NPT which covers a community that is not vulnerable to extremism.* This decision was based on a number of reasons mainly relating to the fact that it was not as much of a Prevent concern in comparison to the other areas in West Yorkshire evidenced by it being the only district not to be categorised as a priority area by the Home Office. This will be explained in more depth once the selection for the 3rd vulnerable community case study has been outlined, but as a result of this it meant that the search area was already reduced to just Calderdale and Kirklees.

As the fundamental criteria driving the selection of Case Study 3 was that it must be different to a different type of extremism to Islamic, logic suggested that a good option would be right wing extremism; as noted by Backes (2007) in the literature review even though the process of radicalisation is thought to be the same, the two ideologies upon which these types of extremism are based are polar opposites. The key

problem with utilising communities vulnerable to right wing extremists as a basis for the case study was that they are traditionally much harder for Prevent and the police to engage with due to a fundamental characteristic which is that other than rallies, demonstrations and closed meetings there is little opportunity for the officers to engage with them as a group as they do not typically have community or faith centres, such as with the Muslim and Kurdish communities. Furthermore the people who attend right wing demos and protests are typically gathered for the event and are from different areas of the country as oppose to living in one neighbourhood such as with Kurdish or Jewish for example. That said there were still key characteristics that could be used to identify communities which *might* be vulnerable to right wing extremism; high white population, high disillusion, unemployment, community tensions (RUSI, 2009). These factors were then used to narrow down areas which might fit the criteria.

There were many areas within the Kirklees and Calderdale which have a high white population, but this in isolation does not suggest that they would be areas which were likely to support extreme right wing groups. A better indication was to focus on areas which were not only predominately white but that were also in close proximity to areas which had a high BME population, from which community tensions and resentment based on race may arise. The wider area of Dewsbury was one option for this as it was often identified in the media as being one of the most racially divided towns in Britain, however as an area it was too large to use as a case study so instead all areas of Kirklees and Calderdale were assessed to identify more suitable options. A quick look at the detailed data collated by West Yorkshire Observatory highlighted the following areas which would fall into this category; Batley, Thornhill, Birstall, Mirfield, Dewsbury Moor, Bradley and Elland. Each of these had a white population of over 95% and neighbour areas with a high BME population in some cases as high as 65%. Given that the national BME population of England was 13% and in West Yorkshire 16%, finding an area with a 65% population was quite significant.

To further narrow down these potential case study areas attention was then turned to indications of deprivation; starting with the percentage people of working age who were claiming income support benefits again utilising the West Yorkshire Observatory data. The national average was 14.4% and the West Yorkshire average was 16.7%, therefore 15% was chosen as cut off point to identify areas with a higher rate of deprivation than usual. This left four; Batley (24.9%), Thornhill (21.3%), Dewsbury Moor (20.7%) and Birstall (17.3%). None of the Calderdale locations scored over 15.0% therefore they were provisionally excluded from further research (unless the Kirklees areas proved unsuitable). It is worth noting that the these figures were also corroborated against figures of children in poverty which is another indicator of deprivation, these statistics are not included here however they effectively mirror the above figures thus further illustrating that these are areas of high deprivation. A similar point is that the unemployment rate across England was 3.8% (2012); each of the areas other than Birstall at 3.7%, scored higher than this (between 3.9% - 5.9%). Therefore Birstall was excluded as an option for the case study narrowing down the potential case study areas to three.

Looking at community tensions in these areas to give a better indication of which would be the most suitable area for a case study. Information from the National Community Tension Team was used along with a brief interrogation of open source media reporting. The area of Thornhill was often highlighted with issues relating to poor community cohesion including a well-known incident that has often been referred to as a trigger in poor community relations in the area between White and Asian people; the murder of Jack Carter in August 2011. Carter (a white male) was killed by two Asian males during a fight in the area, it is reported that the conflict stemmed from ongoing neighbourhood issues and sparked further tensions (Tehrani, 2012). There is also uncorroborated reporting that Carter had links to the English Defence League and had the English Defence League logo as his Facebook Profile picture at the time of his death. (The Press: Intelligent Weekly, 2011). Although the English Defence League has since denied any involvement in the incident the victim's support for the group is acknowledged, furthermore the murder and subsequent sentences of the two Asian males which were seen as low by many has been

a point of anger across many right wing groups such as the English Defence League, Combat 18 and Combined ex Forces often making reference to it during campaigns and holding demonstrations in his honour. With reference to Dewsbury Moor there was less media attention given to the community tensions in that area however this did not necessarily mean that such issues did not exist, the same was found of Batley.

Ultimately in utilising characteristics which are specific to communities that could be vulnerable to right wing extremism the number of potential case studies was down to three NPT areas; Batley, Thornhill and Dewsbury Moor. There was no need to narrow it down any further than this at this stage however to ensure that they were suitable the further aspects of the initial criteria had to be applied to each of them. Much of the criteria was subsequently met through the above process i.e. poor community cohesion, *significant number of people who follow the same ideology* and *historic or current community tensions*. However one key difficulty with right wing extremist groups is that they are active across the country and do not limit themselves to one geographical area therefore it was hard to identify if they are prominent in a specific area. To ensure this criteria was met further analysis was carried out:

Prominent controversial individual or groups active in area
When looking at the activities of the English Defence League, Combat 18 or other XRW groups it was apparent that the area of Dewsbury as a whole attracted a great deal of attention. Media reporting was full of stories relating to English Defence League demos in Dewsbury Centre and the English Defence League even had a website dedicated to its Dewsbury Division. (Facebook, Yorkshire EDL Dewsbury Division; live as of 2014). One thing that was apparent though was that there was very little open source reporting which could narrow down the area any more than Dewsbury, and although all three of the areas are classed as Dewsbury, it would be safer to corroborate that there was support for prominent groups in these areas. To do so official government results for the 2008 local elections were consulted (House of Commons, 2009). Assuming the voting rates for the British National Party (BNP) could provide an

indication for people who may have been sympathetic to the right wing view points helped to justify the areas up for selection at this point. Despite the BNP only getting 14% of the votes across all of the local elections, in Batley they got 45.8%, in Thornhill 50.5% and in Dewsbury Moor 41.7% which was a considerably high figure in comparison and although the BNP are not classed as an extreme group this a clear indication that there was a high number of people who were sympathetic to right wing ideology in these areas.

To conclude the process of elimination detailed above provide three areas which all met the criteria of including communities which may be vulnerable to right wing extremism. To clarify they were; Batley, Thornhill and Dewsbury Moor which were policed by two NPTs; Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw and Dewsbury & Mirfield. These NPTs were then put forward to see if they fit the general criteria for case study selection.

Case Study four – Not deemed vulnerable to any type of extremism beyond the average

As mentioned above, Wakefield was chosen as a basis for the starting point of the search for the case study 4 which was an area which was not deemed to be vulnerable to any type of extremism. This was based on the findings that out of all of the local authority areas within West Yorkshire, Wakefield received the least Prevent funding (Tax Payers Alliance, 2009), so it would be fair to deduce that central government did not believe there were vulnerable communities which warrant the level of attention as places such as Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees. To narrow it down further the various areas of Wakefield were compared to identify which might be the most suitable. Due to the fact that the vast majority of neighbourhoods in the Wakefield and indeed the UK will not be vulnerable to extremism it was not deemed necessary to go to the same length of research as with the previous case studies, instead the research simply needed to show that the areas selected were not vulnerable. Logic suggested that such an area will be similar to the national average with regards to deprivation, ethnography, and crime, etc. so this was used as a basis for the search for case study four.

Deprivation

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010, Wakefield as an area ranked 67th in the most deprived district in England (out of 326 districts), (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010), indicating that it was in no way an affluent area. This means that out of the seven policing areas that Wakefield was divided into most of them would fall below the national average of deprivation thus ruling out the majority. Looking at the IMD figures from 2010 it is clear that these areas were; Wakefield Central (which incidentally would have been ruled out due to it having the highest Muslim diaspora in Wakefield anyway), Castleford, Normanton & Featherstone, Pontefract & Knottingley and Wakefield South East. These were therefore excluded from selection which only left Wakefield North West and Wakefield Rural. Within these areas there were neighbourhoods which were closest to the average figures for deprivation in West Yorkshire such as Stanley, Ossett & Outwood, and Sandal. As such these were investigated further.

Ethnography

The national average for people of a white ethnicity in England and Wales was 79.8%, in West Yorkshire it was slightly higher with 88.6% and in Wakefield higher again at 92.8%. The two remaining areas have 96.3% (Wakefield Rural) and 93.2% (Wakefield North West). Although it cannot justifiably be said that either of these reflected the national average, Wakefield North West was almost exactly the West Yorkshire average and given that the purpose of case study four was to somewhat act as a control in a PhD which is focused on reflecting West Yorkshire as an area was the logical choice. It was difficult to get standardised statistics regarding ethnicity that were more geographically narrow than this, but nevertheless these were useful in that they show that the areas in Wakefield North West was more suitable than Wakefield Rural.

Crime

Similarly when looking at signal crimes such as criminal damage and ASB a quick comparison showed that Wakefield North West had slightly higher crime rate (incident per person, per year) than Wakefield Rural (3.2 vs 2.8). However again this was closer to the national average of 3.4 in the same period suggesting that it was the more suitable choice for a comparison case study.

Further open source research into community tensions or active controversial groups showed that it was in no way more vulnerable than any other area in the UK and that it was extremely close to the national average in most indicators therefore making it a perfect option. Although there were few statistics available to narrow the area down further than this, it was not necessary with case study four as the necessity is no vulnerability and moreover the case study was the NPT not the area. Consequently the selection for case study four was Wakefield North West NPT possibly with a focus that looks at engagement with the areas of Stanley and Ossett & Outwood.

The case studies

To conclude, the case study selection process developed and adopted has been described as a step by step process that the researcher went through to select the possible areas which could have been used as case studies according to the pre-defined criteria for vulnerable communities. In some cases there were a few options remaining and in others there was one clear area. Below is a table which presents the results of the above process.

Table 3. Case study initial selection results

	Option	Area	NPT	Vulnerability
Case study	1	Manningham	Manningham & Toller	Islamic
	2	Toller	Manningham & Toller	Islamic
	3	Sticker lane	Bowling & Barkerend	Islamic
Case	1	Lincoln Green	Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	Kurdish
	2	Roundhay	Roundhay, Alwoodley & Moortown	Kurdish

	3	Harehills	Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	Kurdish
	4	Irish Centre	Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	Irish
Case study	1	Thornhill	Dewsbury & Mirfield	Extreme Right Wing
	2	Batley	Batley, Birstal & Birkenshaw	Extreme Right Wing
	3	Dewsbury Moor	Dewsbury & Mirfield	Extreme Right Wing
Case study	1	Ossett & Outwood	Wakefield North West	None
	2	Stanley	Wakefield North West	None
	2	Sandal	Wakefield Rural	None

Each of these NPTs options were approached to gage interest and the final case studies were selected based on levels of willingness and other practicalities such as staff absences. The final case studies have been anonymised and will be referred to as case study A, B, C and D, from this point to abide with ethical and legal guidelines. For reference:

Table 4. Case Study selection results

Case Study	NPT	Division	Vulnerability
1	Case Study One	Bradford	Islamic
2	Case Study Two	Leeds	Kurdish
3	Case Study Three	Kirklees	Extreme Right Wing
4	Case Study Four	Wakefield	None

Case Study Participants

The participants involved in the research were intentionally varied to offer differing insights and perspectives on the research areas. In addition to the case studies participants were sought from the Counter Terrorism arena, the general public, and members of the vulnerable communities which were identified. The involvement that these participants varied according to what they could offer to the research.

<u>NPT Participants</u>

The Officers, PCSOs and PEOs from the Case Study NPTs were the main participants. Considering that one NPT typically consists of three shift-teams amounting to approximately 15 PCs, 15 PCSOs, three Sergeants and one Inspector it was not practical to include all of these as participants. The researcher would not be able to manage this many subjects, (especially when multiplied by four case studies) nor could it be expected that all of these individuals would be willing to commit to such work. Therefore, it was decided that using a sample of two PCs, two PCSOs, one Sergeant and one Inspector from each case study would be the best option, and where there was a PEO embedded in the NPT they would be included too. Identifying the participants from each NPT was largely dependent on staff volunteering, however, meetings took place with the Inspectors of each case study prior to approaching the rest of the potential participants and all Inspectors stated that they were willing for both themselves and willing members of their teams to participate. Preliminary enquiries confirmed that the stated requirements would be met without complication, i.e. in each NPT there are over 30 possible participants but only 6-7 were required. The only restrictions placed on the subjects was that they needed to be spread across the NPTs (not all from one shift), and that they need to be willing to commit to the full 12 month period of research. The table below shows the potential pool of participants compared to those selected to take part.

Table 5. Police participant pool of candidates.

Rank/Role	Pool of participants per case study	Participants chosen per case study
Inspector	1	1
Sergeant	3	1
PC	5 (average)	2
PCSO	5 (average)	2
PEO	2 (excluding Wakefield)	1
Total	*16*	*7*

This table shows the pool for each case study, to summarise the NPT Participants in total across all four case studies are detailed below:

- eight PCs

- eight PCSOs
- three PEOs (Wakefield does not have one)
- four Sergeants
- four Inspectors

Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) participants

As the research is directed at the delivery of the Prevent Strategy the research also needed to engage existing Prevent staff. As the Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs) were generally embedded within the NPTs on a day to day basis, within these case studies, their participation would be incorporated through the case study fieldwork. However, the research required a separate way of dealing with the Community Contact Officers (CCOs) and other Prevent staff who were more distinct from NPTs. This involvement was not as intense as with the case studies and was predominantly used to provide a comparative context to the work with the NPTs. As such it consisted mainly of interviews with the CCOs, Sergeants and Inspectors involved in managing the Prevent delivery in these areas. There was one Inspector, one Detective Sergeant and one CCO for each area, all of whom stated that they were willing to participate in the research.

Public participants

As community engagement is the fundamental logic behind the Prevent Strategy the research also utilised members of the public and key community contacts. Ultimately, the research needed to identify what the views of the vulnerable communities were regarding Prevent and establish how the delivery of Prevent actually translates in terms of community engagement and cohesion. To do this key community figures (such as Imams, community centre workers, teachers) were invited to contribute to the research to gage their views on Prevent, whether it helped to promote community engagement and whether this in turn helped to build resilience to violent extremism. Various Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings were also utilised as an avenue of engaging with audiences which were keen to resolve community issues, and focus groups including members of the public who would not typically volunteer

their opinions in a public arena were also set up. Many of the focus group participants were identified based on what was found in the activity reports (detailed later) i.e. if a certain group or business had been engaged with regularly they would be contacted as potential participants. Ultimately, it would never be possible to engage with the community as a whole and selecting certain individuals would not provide an accurate reflection either; consequently this is aspect of the research would play more of a supporting role as oppose to being the primary source of information.

Participant Grading

For the ease of organisation and reference, the researcher categorised the participants in Tiers as detailed below:

- Tier One Participants = PCs, PCSOs and PEOs of case studies
- Tier Two Participants = Sergeants, Inspectors of case studies and CTU, along with CCOs
- Tier Three Participants = Public
- Tier Four Participants = Any other participant who was called upon for this research i.e. other WYP staff members, the PCC, academics etc.

It is important to note that Tiers were not graded on importance in anyway rather they are grouped according to the level of direct involvement that they would have with the research. The Tier One participants were called upon the most frequently during the fieldwork. The below table demonstrates the numbers and types of participants used, broken down by case study and tiers of participation.

Table 6. Participant tiers.

Case Study 1 Bradford	Case Study 2 Leeds	Level of Participation	Case Study 3 Kirklees	Case Study 4 Wakefield
2 PCs 2 PCSOs 1 PEO	2 PCs 2 PCSOs 1 PEO		2 PCs 2 PCSOs 1 PEO	2 PCs 2 PCSOs
1 Sgt 1 Inspector CTU Staff	1 Sgt 1 Inspector CTU Staff		1 Sgt 1 Inspector CTU Staff	1 Sgt 1 Inspector CTU Staff
Local Community Members / Focus Groups	Local Community Members / Focus Groups		Local Community Members / Focus Groups	Local Community Members / Focus Groups
Other Participants i.e. academics, PCC, etc.	Other Participants i.e. academics, PCC, etc.		Other Participants i.e. academics, PCC, etc.	Other Participants i.e. academics, PCC, etc.

■ Tier 1   ■ Tier 2   ■ Tier 3   □ Tier 4

Duration and Intensity

It was expected that the period of fieldwork would last 12 Months commencing around April 2014. This was deemed a beneficial time to start for a number of reasons; Ramadan 2014 occurred between 28/06/14 – 27/07/14 thus would hopefully allow time for fruitful working relations to be established beforehand in order to see if this period of religious and cultural significance affected Police – Community engagement. Furthermore, much of NPT work is seasonal in the sense that certain periods experience higher rates of certain crimes for example winter with burglaries, summer with public order etc. hopefully starting the fieldwork at a time when NPTs attention was taken up less by burglars and more by the increased number of people out on the streets would provide a more productive initial insight into the nature of NPT and community engagement.

12 months was assessed to be a sufficient period to undertake in depth research into the four case studies and it was decided that the actual data collection (which was to be done through activity reports; detailed later) would be carried out on a 'one month on – one month off' approach'. This provided sufficient time to collate the required amount of good quality data, whilst ensuring a true reflection of the overall research period was gained. It also allowed time in the 'one month off' periods to focus on other aspects of the fieldwork such as interviews, focus groups and analysis. Furthermore, it was thought that the Tier One participants were much more likely to maintain an interest if done this way as oppose to a continuous 12 month period.

As NPTs in West Yorkshire worked on a three week shift cycle it allowed a visit to each NPT at least once every three week period. This was sufficient as the 'routine' data was gathered by way of 24 hour activity reports, thus there was little need to have physical contact too often. The visits served more of a supportive purpose and allowed any issues to be resolved and provided the participants with the opportunity to discuss anything about the research any issues that the participants may have wanted to discuss. It also provided some additional time to carry out the observations and interviews. The below time table displays the planning process for how each of the participants would be met with at least once a month (every other month). It took into account shift patterns;[8] and meant that all 19 meetings could be achieved in a one month period as four participants could be seen on one day – in two sessions (with the exception of the PEOs). For this to work it was crucial that the participants from each case study were spread only over two shifts, ideally one PC and one PCSO per shift for balance. It should be noted that the below table is only an example and simply served the purpose of ensuring that the proposed intensity was possible and practical.

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[8] The Green boxes represent when the participants are working an early shift (8:00-16:00), whilst the Ambers represent late shifts (15:00-00:00). The "X" shows when the meeting would take place.

Table 7. Police participant interaction time table.

Date (April)	Case Study 1 Bradford Shift 1 (PC 1 & PCSO 1)	Case Study 1 Bradford Shift 2 (PC 2 & PCSO 2)	Case Study 2 Leeds Shift 3 (PC 3 & PCSO 3)	Case Study 2 Leeds Shift 1 (PC 4 & PCSO 4)	Case Study 3 Kirklees Shift 2` (PC 5 & PCSO 5)	Case Study 3 Kirklees Shift 3 (PC 6 & PCSO 6)	Case Study 4 Wakefield Shift 1 (PC 7 & PCSO 7)	Case Study 4 Wakefield Shift 2 (PC 8 & PCSO 8)	Case Study 1 Bradford 8x4 (PEO 1)	Case Study 2 Leeds 8x4 (PEO 2)	Case Study 3 Kirklees 8x4 (PEO 3)
1 M											
2 T											
3 W									X		
4 T											
5 F											
6 S	X	X									
7 S											
8 M											
9 T											
10 W										X	
11 T											
12 F											
13 S			X	X							
14 S											
15 M											
16 T											
17 W											X
18 T											
19 F											
20 S					X	X					
21 S											
22 M											
23 T											
24 W											
25 T											
26 F											
27 S							X	X			
8 S											
29 M											
30 T											

Research Methodology

When devising the research strategy careful consideration was given to the various research method options available and it was decided that a mixed methodological approach including semi-structured interviews, activity reports, observations and focus groups would be most suitable. The benefits of using a mixed methodological approach have been noted extensively (for wider discussion see De Lisle, 2011; Creswell, 2006; Lieber, 2009). For this research it was felt that utilising multiple mixed methods would provide a broader perspective of the topics pertinent to the aims, not least by allowing the research to explore the views and experiences of the police and the communities which they are policing. It is widely accepted that utilising more than one method also gives further strength to the research as it provides an

opportunity to validate the results of one method, with the results of a secondary data set; *"The ability to triangulate the data and assure its validity and level of variance can also be invaluable."* (Migiro, 2011, p.1) it was felt that this would be a particularly useful tool given the sensitive nature of the topics in question and potentially conflicting perspectives. Whilst there are additional challenges which come with designing and merging multiple datasets around set questions or research aims, many feel that the a mixed method approach which produces both qualitative and quantitative information adds credibility to the research and subsequent findings; *"the combination of methods provides a better understanding than either the quantitative or qualitative method alone"* (Creswell, 2006, p.8).

Research aim one; to investigate the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy was met by the literature review which looked at existing knowledge and theory on the matter, focus groups provided a community perspective based on first-hand experience of the importance to members of the public, whilst the interviews provided the police perspective on the importance of community engagement to policing and Prevent.

Research aim two; to understand the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy was largely met through the activity reports which provided quantifiable data on the day to day operations of NPTs. The interviews and observations then allowed a comparison of these findings along with additional discussion which contributed qualitative evidence to the research question. To a lesser extent the focus groups also allowed for triangulation of these findings and comment on whether the activities of their NPTs translates into meaningful delivery of the Prevent Strategy to the communities it aims to serve.

Research aim three; to assess whether NPTs should and could be used differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy; is met through all of the methodologies used. It is not only linked to the findings of the first two research aims, but the interviews and focus groups allowed for further discussion around not just the current state of policing and Prevent, but the possible future state linking to whether NPTs

"should" be involved in a different way in the delivery of Prevent. These suggestions for change would then be then tied into the findings of the activity reports and observations which related to the challenges and barriers to determine if the delivery of Prevent "could" be changed.

Crucially this mixed methodological approach allowed different methods to be used to further investigate suppositions at different levels meaning that the overall results of the research had increased coverage and were comprehensive, overcoming the limitations of using any of the methods in isolation. This chapter briefly summarises the mixed methods chosen for this research but further detail relating to the advantages and disadvantages associated with the specific elements of this approach are detailed in the respective chapters of this thesis.

Interviews

The author used a series of semi-structured interviews throughout a 12 month period of research in which the questions were tailored to suit the subject and the various aspects of the research aims. The majority of the interviews took place with Tier One participants; namely 1 PC, 1 PCSO and 1 PEO from each case study area to provide a stratified sample (detailed in chapter three). Tier Two participants were also interviewed as part of the process to provide an alternative perspective. The interviews were short in length (planned for approximately 25-45 minutes) to minimize the impact on the participants other duties and were based on a range of topics to help inform the different areas of the research, including their perceptions of the communities which they serve, their thoughts on Prevent, their experiences of engagement and any suggestions regarding the possibility of mainstreaming the Strategy across NPTs. A brief outline schedule was provided to the participants beforehand in order to allow them time to prepare so the research could get the most out of the interaction. The interviews were recorded and transcribed both of which were stored securely and in line with all legal and ethical guidelines. Thematic analysis of the interview records was carried out, with a focus on comparisons and differences across participant role and case study area.

Police activity reports analysis

The majority of the quantitative data was gathered from activity reports. An activity report was a template designed by the researcher, which was given to the entire case study Tier One participants to fill out at the end of each shift set. The report covered such issues as the geographical areas that they patrolled in during that shift, the duties that they performed, and the recording of any community engagement. This was effectively the area which required the most work for any of the subjects and thus it was important that they were fully aware of the responsibilities and level of commitment required of them beforehand. Similarly when designing the report, consideration was given to their other priorities such as workload and getting home after a long shift, therefore making the report as short and simple to use as possible was a priority. The report covered six main questions with space for short answers (or in some case tick boxes). The researcher made it clear to the participants beforehand that they were not expected to write overly long reports, and advice was provided regarding the quality of information that was required in the responses.

Focus Groups

Once the researcher began to receive information from the Tier One participants, it became possible to identify key contact points within the community who could be consulted. Certain representatives or local businesses which had received a lot of attention from the Officers were approached to allow those concerned to provide their views of Prevent and the Police. Although the researcher identified most of the focus groups beforehand based largely on the vulnerable communities criteria and preliminary research, this two stage process to the fieldwork added strength and direction as the focus groups were carefully selected according to what they could be expected to offer the research. One specific focus group from each area was held, but the researcher also attended existing community events such as PACT and School meetings, in order to get a more holistic coverage of the community.

One key aspect of community participation in the research that had to be addressed was that Prevent and extremism is a very sensitive issue, therefore people could have been scared to speak honestly in an open forum about it. In order to overcome this the researcher created opportunities whereby people felt comfortable sharing their opinions in confidence, for example it was explained beforehand that everything they shared would be anonymised and provided private feedback forms that they could fill in if they did not wish to speak about such issues in front of others.

Observations

As a Special Constable within West Yorkshire Police, the researcher already had the access and consent of the force to patrol with the Tier One participants[9] in order to observe them on duty which provided an excellent insight, but also the opportunity to validate what was being recorded on the activity reports. The key consideration regarding this was whether or not the author should observe as an On-Duty Special Constable, or simply as an independent observer. If the researcher were to work alongside the participants as a Special Constable then the benefits would be that the community members that are dealt with during that shift would not know that any assessment of the participants was taking place and would in theory act as normal. However the weaknesses were that simply by working as part of that NPT the researcher would potentially be influencing the actions of the participants, i.e. if tasks may be given to that participant because they are in a pair which would not have otherwise. Alternatively if the author went out simply as an observer the community members may be affected by the fact that there was somebody observing and may act differently than normal putting added pressure on the participant. More crucially though, the researcher could not simply turn-off being a Police Officer due to legal requirements, therefore if a situation arose where the participant needed assistance they would have a duty to act as a Police Officer and help. There was also the question of personal safety; if the researcher was to go simply as an observer they would not be wearing any personal protective equipment for example; i.e. radio, stab

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[9] Observing the PEO's may not be possible due to limitations regarding sensitivity of the community and issues that may be discussed etc.

vest, baton etc. despite the fact that they would still be attending the same situations. The wider discussion and decision regarding participant and non-participant observation is covered in chapter six.

Ethical considerations

When carrying out any research, a number of key ethical principles must be abided by to protect the participants and to a lesser extent the results of the research. Ethics and the need to regulate practice has been a defining feature of social and medical research since the 1940s, and many have sought to develop set principles. For wider discussion and comparison of examples see (Cowburn et.al. 2016; Israel, 2014; and Grix, 2010). To ensure the practical application of these principles was appropriate, the research also adhered to the University of Huddersfield's School Research Ethical Panel (SREP) guidelines. This involved a formal application to the panel prior to the research taking place which outlined the methodology intended, the ethical considerations, and the steps taken to mitigate harm. In addition to this, the researcher also gained permission to study from key representatives for West Yorkshire Police and the North East Counter Terrorism Unit, including the PCC, Assistant Chief Constable for local policing, Head of Prevent at NECTU, in addition to informed consent from each of the participants. Examples of the letters requesting permission to study and informed consent forms can be found in the appendices. The next chapters in this research outline the more specific ethical issues and steps taken in relation to each methodology used, however as a general overview, the wider research strategy took account of the following five commonly accepted ethical principles for research: minimising the risk of harm; obtaining informed consent; protecting anonymity and confidentiality; avoiding deceptive practices; and providing the right to withdraw from the research.

<u>Minimising the risk of harm</u>

There are a number of harms that can come to a research participant including physical, psychological, and financial. This research was designed around a strategic which would ensure protection against each of them. Steps were taken to ensure that no participant would be put in any additional danger as part of

this research. The members of the public who would be taking part in focus groups would be consulted with beforehand to ensure that all participants were aware of standards for appropriate behaviour and all venues were carefully risk assessed prior to the sessions. They would also not be widely advertised to reduce the chance of anybody targeting the sessions for any reason. Protection of the police participants was also taken into account. The research was designed in a way that meant there was no reason, advantage or incentive for a participant to put themselves in any situation whilst taking part in this research that they would not ordinarily do whilst on duty.

Providing psychological support to participants was crucial given the fairly sensitive nature of the subject matters. All participants were provided with the researcher's contact information so they could discuss any issues either before, during or after the fieldwork. Furthermore details of relevant agencies were provided including Victim Support, Samaritans and West Yorkshire Police are be able to offer different forms of help and guidance in relation to any psychological support that they may require.

The research methodologies chosen were carefully selected and designed to ensure that no financial cost would be attributed to taking part in the research for participants. Consideration was given to financial remuneration for taking part in the focus groups, however instead it was decided that all focus groups would be planned with existing social groups and would be scheduled for a time and place that they would be meeting anyway. This meant that there was no additional travel costs or time associated for participants taking part. The activity reports, interviews, and observations for the police participants were all designed to take place in their working time. They would not be required or expected to work overtime to complete the research or be expected to travel to any different locations other than their own police station.

<u>Obtaining informed consent</u>

This research was approved by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) of West Yorkshire Police along with other senior members of the organisation who will have a more direct involvement for example, the head of NE CTU and the Assistant Chief Constable in charge of Local Policing. All of the NPT Inspectors for the Case Studies were also liaised with and were happy for their teams to be used for the research. In addition to the key participants the researcher also gained the consent of the following representatives from West Yorkshire Police:

- Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing
- Detective Superintendent for Prevent (North East Head)
- NPT Inspectors from all 4 case studies.
- Sergeants of Prevent (Local Divisional Heads)
- Community Contact Officers from all 4 case studies.
- Various NPT Officers to be used in Pilot tests.

<u>Ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality</u>

All data collated during the research was sanitised to ensure that no individual participant could be identified. Each participant was allocated a numerical pseudonym for example a PC from Case Study 1 may be referred to as 1A. A similar system was employed for members of the focus groups or wider community. However, participants were informed prior to consenting to the research that whilst every step would be taken to protect their anonymity, it may not be possible to offer a complete guarantee as other participants (particularly in the focus groups) could reveal identities and it was difficult to conceal which NPTs were being used as case studies due to the distinguishing features which made them so useful to this research. For example any person with local knowledge of Leeds will be able to identify the areas with a notable Kurdish and thus could identify the NPT which polices this area. However this was been discussed with the PCC, ACC, relevant NPT Inspectors and participants who were happy for the work to go ahead given that ultimately the Police are an accountable public body.

Precautions were also taken to ensure that all data collated in the course of this research would remain confidential and all participants were informed of this from the outset. All data was stored securely on a password protected computer on the West Yorkshire Police encrypted systems and any audio data (interview tapes) were transcribed immediately and stored in the same way allowing for the deletion of the recording. All data was destroyed upon the completion of the research.

Avoiding deceptive practices

Whilst some forms of covert methods are widely used for example during observations (see chapter six), it is generally accepted that deceptive practices cause conflict with the principles of informed consent and therefore should only be used where absolutely necessary. For the purposes of this research it was decided that no deceptive practices would be used as it was crucial for the integrity and impact of the research that all participants are willing based on open and transparent information regarding the methods and aims of the research.

Upholding the participants' right to withdraw from the research

A common ethical standard is that participants are able to withdraw from the research at any time up until the point where it is no longer feasible, i.e. publication. This standard has been adhered to in this research and all participants were informed of this right from the outset. Participants were provided with the information of the researcher, the research supervisor and details of the university so that they could withdraw if they chose. It was also important that they did not have to provide a reason for their withdrawal and that any indication that a participant wanted to withdraw was not challenged in order to make this a free-choice. One participant did choose to withdraw from the research as they changed roles during the fieldwork period, in this instance, the individual still provided continued consent to allow the researcher to use the data that had been gathered so far.

<u>Conflict of interest</u>

During this period of work, the researcher was also a serving Special Constable within West Yorkshire Police which warranted consideration of whether there would be a conflict of interest. Whilst research into organisations may traditionally be carried out by individuals or groups external to that organisation to ensure independent review. However, as noted by Brown (1996), the blurring of the insider/outsider line within police related research is becoming more common as academic institutes carry out more knowledge exchange programmes with practitioners, and police forces seek more evidence based practices in their operational policies. There are multiple advantages and disadvantages to this blurring of the lines, some of which were relevant in this research. Advantages of the researcher being a Special Constable included a level of trust between the participants and the researcher which may not have been there with an entirely external researcher, understanding of language and acronyms used in policing, and existing access to police IT systems which were used to store the unsanitized data. There are however, also disadvantages which needed to be considered when planning this research relating to inadvertent bias and potential pressure from colleagues.

After a full assessment and discussions with senior police representatives and the research supervisors it was deemed that there would not be a conflict of interest, but that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the researcher's position as a Special Constable would not have any indirect influence over the research. This research was not intended to be a critical review of West Yorkshire Police and there was no financial or career related motivation involved in carrying out the research or indeed pre-empting any conclusions. When approached, West Yorkshire Police representatives were supportive of independent research being carried out in their organisation which they would be able to utilise for their own purposes upon conclusion. The only potential issue related to the researcher's access to information relevant to this research which was not in the public domain. It was crucial not only on a legal basis but also on ethical grounds, that the researcher did not use or was influenced by this information or 'prior' knowledge. To mitigate against this, steps were taken to ensure that every key analytical conclusion and

decision made during the planning stages was recorded in a "decision log", for example which NPTs would be used as case studies, was based entirely on a systematic review of open source data. The researcher regularly revisited and discussed these decisions with the research supervisors.

Consideration was also given to whether the researcher should declare their position as a Special Constable to the participants prior the research taking place. It was decided that it would be more beneficial to be open and transparent with the participants about the researcher's position in order to build trust and avoid deceptive practices. It was quite possible that the participants could discover this during the course of the research which would potentially damage relations. Safety was also a consideration; the researcher would be taking part in non-participant observations as part of the field work (covered in chapter six), and so it was important that the participants knew that the researcher was a qualified Special Constable. It was however likely that the participants could be hesitant sharing their views about their organisations practices with another internal member, particularly if these views were negative. To overcome this, the researcher was clear to stress that their input would be anonymised and they would not be able to be identified by any readers of the research.

Summary

To summarise, the research strategy was designed to meet the aims outlined in the previous chapter in a practical, appropriate, and ethical way. It was decided that West Yorkshire Police would be utilised as the overarching base for the research, under which four NPTs were identified as case studies to represent the wider police service, its policies, and practices. These case studied were identified according to two predetermined sets of criteria which were based on evidence from literature and open source data sets. The research focussed on three forms of extremism to provide a broader basis of understanding in relation to the role of NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, community policing practices and whether this differed across communities. A mixed methodology approach was chosen to ensure that suitable data was gathered to meet all three research aims whilst providing differing perspectives and the

opportunity to validate findings across methods. The fieldwork consisted of interviews, focus groups, activity reports and observations (detailed in the following chapters). Participants were a mix of police personnel and members of the public, and were chosen on a voluntary basis then tiered for organisational purposes. Informed consent was gained from all participants who were aware of their right to withdraw, and further steps were taken during the design stage of the research to ensure that their rights, safety and anonymity would be protected as much as possible.

Introduction

Qualitative research interviews can quite simply be defined as the verbal conversation between two people with the objective of collecting relevant information for the purpose of research. The primary purpose of an interview is to gather information from an individual (or group) about a topic, based on their opinions and experiences. "*The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters"* (Gill et al, 2008, p.1). Interviews can provide more detailed information than many other qualitative research methods such as surveys, predominantly because they offer the opportunity investigate responses further through follow up questions or asking the interviewee to expand or elaborate. Interviews with participants from West Yorkshire Police (detailed later) were chosen as part of the mixed methodological approach, to specifically address research aims two and three:

1. To identify the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy.

2. To assess whether NPTs could and should be utilised differently within the delivery of Prevent.

There are three fundamental types of research interviews; unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Unstructured interviews allow a level of flexibility in that they typically start with one pre-determined question but then develop based on the responses provided. This type of interview is difficult to plan for and has a higher risk of veering off topic, making it a less reliable way to ensure that the research aims are met. Structured interviews are in essence the opposite in that all of the interview questions are pre-written and the interviewer follows the order of the questions much like a script, regardless of the responses being received. Semi-structured interviews provide a middle point for researchers; they are designed around a set number of key questions but allow the interviewer to add additional questions or alter the wording depending on the responses of the interviewee.

For the purpose of this research, it was decided that semi-structured interviews would provide the best opportunity to address the research aims consistently across the case studies, by allowing further investigation into pertinent topics or opinions which could arise. Although unstructured interviews can help researchers develop early knowledge on a topic, it was felt that the questions for this research needed to be identified and asked in a more systematic way, to ensure that participants could provide information on the relevant issues which could later be compared across the case studies:

> *"Unstructured interviews are usually the least reliable form of interviews from a research viewpoint, because no questions are prepared prior to the interview… comparison of answers given by different respondents tends to be difficult due to the differences in the formulation of questions."*
>
> (Dudovskiy, 2016, p.172).

Unstructured interviews can also be much more time-consuming to carry out, can be difficult to manage and confusing for participants to take part in. *"Unstructured interviews are usually very time-consuming (often lasting several hours) and can be difficult to manage, and to participate in, as the lack of predetermined interview questions provides little guidance on what to talk about (which many participants find confusing and unhelpful).* (Gill et al, 2008, p.3). Often the reason for choosing to use unstructured interviews is to be flexible to the needs of the participant and to allow for a deeper disclosure into elements that the interviewer may not necessarily have planned for but would find useful nonetheless. As a result it also means that the interviewer has less control over the direction of the discussion than with other forms of interview. Furthermore, the lack of pre-determined interview questions places an additional emphasis on the participant to identify topics of discussion, which they may not be prepared for or comfortable with doing. It is important when carrying out unstructured interviews, that the interviewer is able to provide prompts and guidance to encourage dialogue. The flexibility of unstructured interviews also means that it is difficult to predict how long they will take as this is not set around a specific list of

questions or research objectives. As the interview participants in this research were serving members of West Yorkshire Police and would be taking part in the interviews during working hours, it was important that the interviews were as efficient as possible to minimize the impact of the research on the participants and their wider teams.

Structured interviews are much quicker to carry out and are much easier to manage; *"Structured interviews are, essentially, verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked. Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer."* (Gill et al, p.3, 2008). Although using structured interviews would have made the process more efficient for the participants and would have given the researcher the control over the questions asked (allowing the interview to stay relevant to the research aims), it was felt that there needed to be a degree of flexibility to adapt the questions to the different case studies and occupations of participants. There are also efficiencies in the analysis of structured interviews; because the exact same questions are asked of each participant, the responses can be more easily compared. *"Data analysis in structured interviews usually tends to be more straightforward compared to other forms of interviews, because researcher can compare and contrast different answers given to the same questions."* (Dudovskiy, 2016, p.172). Despite the appeal of simpler analysis, the key disadvantage for using structured interviews for this research was that they do not allow for further exploration of responses and thus the data provided could have lacked the level of detail required to meet the research aims. *"With no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration… they only allow for limited participant responses and are, therefore, of little use if 'depth' is required."* (Gill et al, 2008, p.3). It was felt that semi-structured interviews would be more suitable for this research as they would not only allow for the comparison of responses against a series of set questions, but would allow for more in depth exploration of responses in addition to this.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research over the two alternatives based on the merits that they allow for pre-determined questions, and so would be relatively easy to manage, keep the

conversation pertinent to the research, and allow for a comparison of key responses. They would also allow flexibility to explore responses further and adapt the sub-questions to suit the differing roles of the participants across the case studies. It was also felt that individual face-to-face interviews would be the most appropriate for this research. Alternatives such as phone or group interviews were considered as a potentially more efficient way of obtaining views, but it was decided that the research would benefit most from face-to-face interviews given that there had already been a level of engagement built up between the researcher and the participants which was important to maintain throughout the fieldwork period. It was also thought that group interviews would not empower the participants to speak openly about their views amongst their team members and colleagues. Although this research was not intended to be a critical review of policing practice, it needed to pose questions around the effectiveness and efficiencies of current working practices in order to meet the research aims. This could potentially invite criticism of the organization or colleagues which the participants must be comfortable in sharing without fear of reprisal.

Planning

Consideration was given to a number of factors when planning the interviews to ensure that the research was valid, reliable and ethical. This section of the chapter outlines these considerations and the decisions made.

<u>Number of interviews and participant selection</u>

The purpose of the interviews was to gain a fuller understanding of the current function of NPTs within the delivery of Prevent and to assess whether this could or should be changed. For this reason, it was thought that the best participants to interview would be those who are working within neighbourhood policing and Prevent delivery. As noted in the previous chapter, participants for this research had been categorised into tiers depending on their level of involvement with the research. Tier One participants included two PCs and two PCSOs per case study in addition to one PEO (where applicable). It was felt

that these participants would be able to offer the most in depth insight into how neighbourhood and Prevent policing works in practice in West Yorkshire and so they were put forward for inclusion in the interviews. The Tier Two participants (Detective Inspectors, Detective Sergeants and Community Contact Officers (CCOs) who worked within Prevent) were also chosen for inclusion as it was thought that they would be able to provide a useful Prevent focus beyond that of the PEOs.

Although every participant would have offered valid information for the research, planning, implementing and analysing interviews for all 19 Tier One participants and 8 Tier Two participants would have been too much of an undertaking in addition to the other elements of fieldwork. The research plan also had to take into consideration the level of demand already being placed on these participants through other methodologies used, for example the activity reports. Logistically trying to schedule time in with 27 operational members of West Yorkshire Police would have also been extremely difficult as the nature of their roles mean that they could be called away at any time. Instead, the decision was made that interviewees would include one participant in each of the Tier One roles for each case study. In short, one PC, one PCSO, and one PEO for each area would be interviewed thus providing a stratified 50% coverage of all Tier One participants. One Detective Inspector, one Detective Sergeant and one CCO from across the four case studies would also be interviewed to provide their perspective. In total this amounted to 14 interviews.

As all participants had already been identified, informed of the research and had given consent to take part, there were no issues in recruiting participants for interview. Where multiple participants volunteered to be interviewed in the same role/case study, two individuals were scheduled for interview to account for last minute cancellations, with the second being told they were a contingency. This system worked well and was utilised on one occasion saving time for all involved. It should also be noted that where a participant was keen to be interviewed but was not scheduled in, plans were made to allow them the opportunity to share their views more informally during the observation shifts.

Planning for the duration of the interviews had to take into account a number of considerations. First and foremost, it had to provide enough time to cover all the necessary topics in a relaxed manner so that the participants felt comfortable in providing detailed responses. However, it was also important to keep the interview focused and engaging. Literature and guidance explains that the duration of the interview is very much determined by the topic being explored and the level of detail required, with estimates of good practice ranging from 10-60 minutes (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Creswell, 2007; and Gill, 2008). It would be difficult to meet the aims of this research through interviews which last any less than 10-15 minutes, however it was not thought that 60 minutes would be necessary or appropriate given the fact that the participants are on duty members of West Yorkshire Police. It was decided that the interview schedule (detailed next), should be designed primarily around achieving the research aims, with consideration for the time permitted. Minimum and maximum boundaries were set as 10-30 minutes. Pilot interviews were also carried out as part of this planning process with serving members of West Yorkshire Police (who were not primary participants, but did sign the relevant informed consent forms).

<u>Interview schedule and questions</u>

Once the research objectives had been identified for the interviews, the type of interview and the participants selected, the planning turned to designing the interview schedule. Many practiced researchers would stress that the first step in encouraging willing and open responses from participants is actually setting the environment for the interviews before any questions are asked. The environment should be comfortable, private, and free from any distractions; *"the interviewer should attempt to create a friendly non-threatening atmosphere"* (Connaway and Powell, 2010, p.170). One benefit of carrying out this research within a police service is that there were plenty of functioning interview rooms available for use across each of the case studies. However, although this would have met the criteria for being private, free from any distractions, and already had recording facilities built in, it was felt that they would be too

formal and would project more of an investigatory atmosphere than the open and inquisitive ambiance that was sought. Instead, private meeting rooms within the police stations where the participants were based were inspected for suitability and then booked.

Once the appropriate venues had been identified, an initial explanation of the interview process was provided in writing to those who had volunteered approximately two weeks ahead of the interviews. This included a short overview of the wider research and its aims, the location / date / time for the interview, intended duration, and information around the anonymity assurance and plans for recording the interview. A basic topic guide reflecting the interview schedule was also provided so that the participants felt prepared. However it was stressed, that there was no need to prepare, learn about any of the topics or improve their knowledge in any way ahead of the interviews, as it was not a knowledge test, but more of discussion around their views and experiences. For context, the interviewees were asked during the introductions if they had done any additional preparation ahead of the interview, in order to understand any influence that this process may have had.

Designing the interview schedule was the next task. As the interviews were to be semi-structured, an extensive list of questions was not deemed necessary. Instead four key topics were identified aligned to the research aims, with sub-questions and prompts drafted to help keep the discussion focused or to develop a point further. The four key sections of the interview schedule were:

1. Neighbourhood policing.
2. Prevent policing.
3. Local community.
4. The role of neighbourhood policing in Prevent.

Each of these topics consisted of between three and five sub questions, and further prompts should the interviewer feel it necessary. These topics and order were chosen as they linked directly to the research aims of understanding the current role of neighbourhood policing within communities and within the

delivery of Prevent, and would culminate in a discussion around what the participants felt the role of neighbourhood policing was. This order intentionally started with what was perhaps the simplest or less provocative topics, before gradually moving on to the more challenging discussion which would draw on their own perspectives and suggestions for potential improvements.

> *"It is usually best to start with questions that participants can answer easily and*
>
> *then proceed to more difficult or sensitive topics. This can help put respondents at*
>
> *ease, build up confidence and rapport and often generates rich data that*
>
> *subsequently develops the interview further"* (Legard, 2003, p.142).

It is also common practice to start an interview with a quick introductory section to relax the participant and set the boundaries for the interview. In doing this the interviewer introduced themselves to the participant, gave a quick overview of the research and its aims, outlined the process, what was required of the participant, gave reassurance of confidentiality, and an explanation of any recording devices being used. This in essence marked the start of the interview, which then moved on to the first main section.

As with any qualitative interview method it is crucial to carefully select and word questions in a way which will provide the required focus and level of detail. "*When designing an interview schedule it is imperative to ask questions that are likely to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aims and objectives of the research.*" (Gill et.al., 2008, p.292). The questions used were open-ended to prompt more detailed response (Britten, 1999) and language was used to emphasise the point that this was the participant's opportunity to share their opinions, and was not a knowledge test. For example the first main question asked was;

> *"In your own words, please explain what neighbourhood policing is?"*

This was deemed a strong first question for many reasons; it was open ended and so encouraged participants to break their silence early on in a way which required more than just a 'yes' or 'no' response.

It also covered a topic that all participants should feel comfortable in discussing given their background working within neighbourhood policing. Finally there is no right or wrong answer to this question, although there are accepted definitions of neighbourhood policing, it is accepted as being a broad and varying concept. Some prompts were drafted for the interviewer to use if needed which included "*what do you think the purpose of neighbourhood policing is?*" It was important that the prompts used (as with the main questions) did not influence the answer but rather encouraged the participant to be more specific or keep them focused on the research aims; "*Planned follow-up questions or probes are the questions that make an interview question more specific and help direct the participant to the central issues of the study*" (Bolderston, 2012, p.70). Further questions followed this format and although some were more closely linked, the interviewer was careful to ask one question at a time, avoiding double-barrelled questions and allowing the participant to respond fully before moving on. In addition to the topic specific prompts that were pre-prepared the interviewer would also use generic probing statements to encourage further elaboration. Examples of these would include; "*can you please give me more details?*" or "*why do you think that?*" as recommended by practiced researchers such as Polgar and Thomas (2000). Key literature on the use of interviews within research also stress the importance of body language, the use of pauses, eye contact, and reflective actions which reassure the interviewee that they are being listened to, and encourages further dialogue. The interviewer made the effort to use these techniques as appropriate during the interviews.

It is also important to note that, in line with standard guidance, the draft interview schedule was also piloted with individuals in the same roles as the participants. "*As in any research, it is often wise to first pilot the interview schedule on several respondents prior to data collection proper*". (Pontin, 2000, p.293). Although those involved in the pilot interviews were not official participants of the research, informed consent forms were gained and the same ethical standards were adhered to. These pilot participants were serving members of West Yorkshire Police who worked in the same or similar roles to those being interviewed. This pilot stage allowed for final amendments to be made to the interview schedule to ensure

that the questions were easy to understand, respond to and would gain the right level of detail for the research. The final interview schedule (see Appendix A) sought to gage: the participant's perspective on the function of neighbourhood policing within communities and their role within it; their understanding of the Prevent Strategy and the dynamic between Prevent policing and community policing, and their knowledge and understanding of their local communities. All of these questions can be directly linked to the overall aims of this research.

Ethical considerations

Beyond the overarching ethical considerations outlined in chapter two (methodology, there were also some specific issues to take into consideration before carrying out the interviews including the recording of the interviews, confidentiality, personal safety, and interviewer bias.

Recording

All of the interviews carried out were recorded by the use of a Dictaphone. The participants were informed of this prior to interview and reminded before the interviews commenced. Although consideration was given to filming the interviews, this was not deemed necessary as the interviewer was more interested in what the interviewees had to say as opposed to any body language of visible indicators. The interviewer also took notes during the interview to assist with the structuring of any additional questions, however it was not feasible to expect the interviewer to keep a verbatim record of the interviewer at the time. Although an assistant could have been employed to take a minute of the interview, it was decided that a digital recording that could be played back and transcribed would not only allow for a more accurate record of the interview, but would also be less intimidating that an additional person in the interview room.

Immediately after each interview, time was set aside to transcribe, anonymise and sanitise the recording which could then be stored on a secure system so that the original audio recording could be deleted. This was a crucial safeguard to protect the identity of the interviewees. Transcribing the interview so soon

after the event also helped address any inaudible responses, as it was more likely that the interviewer would remember what was actually said, than if there had been anymore considerable time left between. To this end, the interviewer also considered that it was pertinent to record any notes that they made at the time, or any initial thoughts on the transcribed document. This was conducted in a different font colour and style though so it could easily be differentiated from the verbatim record. Once the transcription was complete, the recording was deleted, and the document was password-protected and saved on a secure West Yorkshire Police system.

Confidentiality

All participants who took part in the research had their identities protected and were given aliases such as Participant 1A. However, due to the public facing nature of their roles, complete anonymity of the Tier One and Two participants could not be guaranteed. Although the case study NPTs were not specifically named in this research, any individual with a good local knowledge of West Yorkshire may be able to identify the case study by its defining features which make it so valuable to this research, for example, and area with a strong Kurdish community in Leeds. This extends to the participants involved in that there are only a limited number of NPT PCs, PCSOs or PEOs working in these areas and thus there is the potential for them to be identified inadvertently. This risk was clearly outlined to the participants, their line managers, and also the PCC and ACC who gave organisational level consent for the research to go ahead. All concerned were satisfied with the steps taken, understood the risk, and were happy to take part as ultimately West Yorkshire Police is a publicly accountable service.

There was still a need for the interview recording to be sanitised. All interviewees had been asked not to provide/discuss any confidential information in the interviews as the findings of this research would in due course be presented in the public domain. However it was important that no interesting or significant points of discussion were lost through the sanitisation process. This included any operational detail or personal information such as names, places, restricted tactics etc. One final reason for undergoing this

process was that although participants were aware of the purpose of this research, they may have felt it necessary to share more critical views of the organisation or their colleagues during their interview. It was important that that they felt comfortable in doing so if they felt it was of use to the research, and so knowing that their names would not be aligned to any of the statements made was also intended to reassure the participants.

Personal safety

Although each of the interviewees were serving members of West Yorkshire Police, it was still crucial to ensure the personal safety of the interviewer by following the same processes as one would for an interview with a member of the public. This included inspecting the venues beforehand and choosing sites which are secure but with clear escape routes, informing the research supervisor and others of the time and place of each interview, contacting them before and after the interview to provide a welfare update, and taking a mobile phone into the interview. As a side note, as the interviews were all carried out in police buildings, the majority had alarm strips on the walls of the meeting rooms which could be activated if needed. This was not a prior requirement, but was considered a benefit.

Interviewer bias

As noted earlier in this chapter, considerable care was given to the structure of the interview and the wording of the questions to minimise the influence that they would have on the responses and subsequent results. This level of consideration also extended to the role and behaviour of the interviewer to avoid what is commonly referred to as 'interviewer bias.' Interviewer bias is defined by Roller, as *"the potential distortion of research outcomes due to unintended influences from the researcher."* (2012, p.4) It is a particular challenge for qualitative research such as this, where the researcher has taken the time to build relationships prior to the interviews, and so must carefully balance their actions to reduce the impact that they may have on any results. Guidance and good practice around maintaining asymmetrical relationships between the interviewer and interviewee, visual cues and non-verbal motivating-factors has

been outlined by those such as Turner (2010) and Sandy & Dumay (2011) and was carefully adhered to during the interviews. However there are also elements which cannot be controlled by the interviewer such as their race, gender, socio-economic standing etc. Any perception that the interviewee has of the interviewer's demographic background could potentially have an inadvertent effect on their response. Although this cannot be controlled (without changing the style of interview to a non face-to-face format such as online), it is something that the interviewer should be aware of. For this research, it was not deemed to be a significant concern given the line of questioning, but it was something that the interviewer would look out for and would if needed be factored into the analysis.

Timing of interviews

One final consideration in the planning stages of the interviews was the need to schedule all of the interviews into the same time-frame. The world of policing and counter terrorism is continually changing and evolving therefore it was important that the interviews were reflective of the same point in time so that valid comparisons could be drawn. The significance of this decision was highlighted by the fact that the initial dates proposed by the researcher for the interviews to take place, clashed with a change in shift patterns. Due to the staggered roll out of the changes, it would have meant that some of the participants being interviewed would be working to the old shift patterns, whilst some would be working to the new ones. Given the impact that this would have on daily duties and practices around community engagement it was crucial to ensure that all participants were in the same situation for interview. For practical reasons, the interviews were scheduled to take place within the same month (and were delayed slightly to allow for the shift pattern changes). It was thought that one-month was a reasonable window to still reflect a point in time, whilst allowing for scheduling with the participants and the transcription of each interview. The researcher did also make sure to monitor any changes in legislation, police policies or practices, and significant events in the media or local communities to ensure that there were no unknown factors which could reduce the validity of comparisons across interview responses.

Implementation

Overall the interviews were a success. The level of planning and preparation was beneficial and each interview took place without incident. The number of interviews carried out (14) provided enough usable data for the research without placing too much of an administrative burden on the researcher or participants. The process for choosing participants (based on a stratified sample of willing volunteers) was also a success as it provided a broad overview across all case studies and roles within the Tier One and Two participant groups. The contingency participants (those who volunteered but were not initially chosen) came in useful on two occasions as the first participants became unavailable at the last minute. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes, (range: 13:46 to 20:28 mins.), this was considered appropriate for the level of detail required and number of topics covered, and was also noted as a positive from many of the participants in their feedback forms. There were also no personal safety issues and the interview records were transcribed relatively easily and efficiently following each interview. Perhaps the greatest success stemmed from choosing the format of semi-structured interviews for this research. This worked very well and also provided the interviewer with the opportunity to add in two extra questions (detailed later) following the first interview which provided a great insight into differences across the case studies which had not been captured in the pilots. The set questions allowed for useful comparison of responses whilst the flexibility of the prompts and spontaneous sub-questions allowed for more in depth discussions where specific issues arose. It did also allow the interviewer a level of control over the flow of the dialogue as in some cases participants were initially quite brief in their responses until they understood that they would be prompted for more information where necessary. In general, the participants all appeared comfortable in sharing their views, to the extent that one participant needed to be closely managed to keep the conversation on the topic at hand as they had on occasion divulged additional unnecessary information.

Perhaps the only element of the interview that did not go entirely as planned related to the use of the Dictaphone. One of the interviews took place on an unusually warm day; in order to make the room more

comfortable, a window was opened. Unfortunately this produced background noise which was not noticeable during the session, but made the interpretation of the recording a little more difficult. To overcome this issue, the interviewer transcribed as full a record as possible and then sent it to the participant with gaps highlighted to ask for clarity around what they said. As notes were taken at the time too, there were only four small gaps for the participant to fill, and thankfully they were able to do so with ease. Nevertheless, this was noted on the official transcription and would also count as a learning point for the researcher.

Analysis and findings

Once all the interviews had been transcribed they were analysed. It was decided that thematic analysis (as outlined in Chapter Two), would be the most suitable analytical approach to compare across the roles and case studies, given the relatively low number of interviews that took place and the overall purposes of the research. The first step in doing so was to give each participant an alias which would allow their role and case study to be identifiable to the researcher, for example PC1, or PCSO2. The letters quite simply denoted their role, whilst the number aligned to their case study. The Tier Two participants were not specifically aligned to any individual case study as their roles required them to work at a West Yorkshire level as opposed to NPT level, for this reason their numerical identifier was '5'.

The next stage of preparing the data for thematic analysis was to code the responses. The responses to each question were reviewed and a coding framework covering the different themes was developed. The numerically coded responses were then collated on a spreadsheet to allow for statistical analysis of the data as well as reflective interpretation of the language and terminologies used. Consideration was given to the use of automated software to code the responses such as NVIVO, however given the relatively small number of responses concerned it was decided that manual coding would be sufficient. The researcher carried out all coding personally to negate the need for inter-rater agreements, vetting of

users, and the transfer of data. Fuller findings are discussed in chapter eight, but this chapter will provide a summary of some of the key findings pertinent to the research aims.

Neighbourhood policing

The first set of questions focused on neighbourhood policing; the purpose was to gauge the participants' level of understanding and perceptions of both neighbourhood policing and Prevent policing. This would help identify any similarities or differences which could indicate reasons for or against the increased involvement between the two, (research aim three). The opening question asked interviewees to explain neighbourhood policing in their own words. All of the participants were able to provide a basic definition of neighbourhood policing with ease; some of the common themes across all responses was the inclusion of terms such as '*community', 'working together*', and '*local'.* For example:

> "*Neighbourhood policing is all about working together with local communities to*
>
> *build trust and relations."* (Participant DS5).

Although all responses followed a similar pattern as the example provided above, there were some subtle differences in the responses when compared across role types. The terminology and language used in responses from NPT participants was very much focused on '*problem solving',* with six out of the eight NPT participants using these words. Although this term was used by some of the other participants, it was occasional and not in the same frequency. Interestingly though, there were commonalities across the PEO and CCO roles, and also between the DI and DS roles. The responses from the PEO and CCOs had a clear emphasis on the '*engagement*' and the relationship elements of neighbourhood policing:

"Neighbourhood policing focuses on building relationships between communities through consistent engagement, that way trust and confidence grows and the local community begin to work with us [the police]." (Participant PEO3).

This focus on engagement and building relations became more apparent in responses to the next questions in this section which related more to the specific purposes of neighbourhood policing. The answers provided by the DS and DIs in the interview were similar but had a more strategic sense to them; both responses covered the basic terms of '*community*' and '*working together*' as noted above, but also included terms such as '*proactive', 'intervention'* and '*long-term'.* None of these words were found in any of the responses from other participants. The logical explanation for this strategic perspective is that these roles have a higher level of responsibility over West Yorkshire as a whole and how the Prevent and local neighbourhood teams police all communities consistently. For this reason the role requires more of an overarching and systematic approach than those who are working directly within smaller communities.

Interestingly, there were no clear differences in the way participants responded to this question based on the case study area that they were aligned to. This suggests a level of consistency in the training and practice of staff across the districts in West Yorkshire Police which would be encouraging to senior leaders. The same was apparent in responses following the initial sub-question; "*What do you think the purposes and aims of neighbourhood policing are?* The coding of these responses showed that the most common themes were to "*build trust and confidence* in local communities" (Participant PCSO4), and "*to focus more on problem solving to stop issues escalating in communities*" (Participant DI5) with very little variation from these themes regardless of role or case study.

The second key question in this section asked interviewees what they thought their role was within neighbourhood policing, or for those more aligned to Prevent policing (i.e. PEOs, CCOs, DSs and DIs),

it asked whether they thought they had a role, to avoid inadvertently influencing the responses. Again there were clear differences in the answers across roles; the Tier One participants (PCs, PCSOs and PEOs) typically stated that their role was to "*provide the link between the police and the community*" (Participant PCSO2), whilst interestingly responses from Tier Two participants CCOs, DSs and DIs, also used the term '*link*' but in the sense that their role was to "*provide the link between the NPTs and the Prevent teams.*" (Participant CCO5). This finding is particularly pertinent to the research aims, as it illustrates the differentiation between the two teams at present; currently PEOs are aligned to and embedded within NPTs but with joint line management from the NPT Inspector and the Prevent team (CCOs and above). The fact that the responses from the PEOs were more similar to the responses from NPT participants than the Prevent team participants is very noteworthy; it could suggest that the system of embedding PEOs within NPTs is working very well, conversely it could also suggest that PEOs are less in touch with their Prevent teams than perhaps they should be. From this initial finding, further sub-questions were added into section four of the interview schedule to investigate this suggestion further. It should be noted however, that the responses provided to this question did represent the intended functions for these roles; that PEOs, as with PCs and PCSOs should be working directly with the public, whilst CCOs, DSs and DIs provide the Prevent oversight and link with the NPTs. So at the very least the responses to these interview questions suggest that the theory of how neighbourhood and Prevent teams should interact at present appears to be working in practice.

This was one of the only questions throughout the entire interviews where there was a discernible difference in how participants answered across the case study areas. All of the participants from case study three mentioned '*community cohesion*' as one of the purposes or priorities of neighbourhood policing, whereas none of the other participants included this in their responses prior to being prompted.

> "*Everyone in our NPT has a responsibility to improve cohesion in our area.*"
>
> (Participant PC3)

"As a PEO I should be engaging with people from different cultures, improving relations and cohesion between them, and nipping any issues in the bud." (Participant PEO3).

In the other interviews, the interviewer followed up the main question with the following prompt; *"Do you feel your role has a part to play in maintaining community cohesion?"* All of the participants answered '*yes'* to this further question, and although there were some slight discrepancies in the level of importance that they felt their roles played in maintaining community cohesion, this was not considered to be significant.

The final question in this section asked whether the participants thought neighbourhood policing in their areas could be improved for the benefit of community cohesion and if so how? The interviewer had prepared some examples to be used as prompts in case the participant did not understand the question but these were only required in one interview (PCSO4). It should also be noted that the wording of the question was altered slightly for the Tier Two participants to refer to neighbourhood policing in West Yorkshire as opposed to their area. The coding of these responses included; the recent changes to shift patterns (which many thought was hindering their ability to engage with communities), the existence of specific community based roles such as PCSOs and PEO (which helps serve the community's needs), and the allocation of ward areas of geographical responsibility (which some felt was a good idea but isn't working in practice due to demand). Most notably though, analysis showed that every participant felt that neighbourhood policing could be improved, and that every participant felt that '*workload and current demands'* were having a negative impact on the ability to deliver neighbourhood policing to a better standard.

> *"Neighbourhood policing should be about spending time in communities and solving problems with people, but we're too busy now rushing from job, to job, to job, to do anything how we'd like, we're always rushing. When I started people would know my name and I'd know them, but now I'm just a stranger in a uniform."* (Participant PC2).

The same reflective sentiment was found in most responses in that people would compare current practices with previous years. When the interviewer asked what had changed in this period to affect the way that participants worked, the resounding answer was that workload had increased.

> *"We've always had workloads, but as an NPT we'd generate a lot of it ourselves and we'd be proactive, now we just get allocated that many jobs to get through, we can't even think about being proactive anymore"* (Participant PC1).

This was echoed across all roles and all case study areas, with some participants specifically commenting on the level of impact that this has had on communities;

> *"PCSOs traditionally didn't carry workloads so that we could be more proactive, that's not the case anymore. We should be called Police Constable Support Officers, not Police Community Support Officers, because now we're basically just police officers without the same powers".* (Participant PCSO1).

Although this last comment was said with a level of humour the participant was very serious in their belief that the increasing pressures and workloads being placed on NPTs was negatively affecting their ability to proactively engage within communities. This was perhaps best summed up by Participant PC2 who claimed that;

"Neighbourhood policing doesn't exist anymore. Calling us an NPT doesn't make us an NPT, we're just another response team now". (Participant PC2).

This conflict between increasing demand being placed on the police and re-prioritisation away from neighbourhood policing over the past five years will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight, but nevertheless the fact that every single participant involved in these interviews stated that increasing workloads was impacting on their ability to deliver neighbourhood policing should be noted. It not only informs research aim two*, 'what is the current role of neighbourhood policing in Prevent'*, but also impacts on the debate around research aim three and the potential for this to be increased.

<u>Prevent</u>

The second section of the interview schedule focused on Prevent, in particular the participants' understanding and perceptions of Prevent. The first question simply tried to gage what the participants' current understanding and knowledge level of the Prevent Strategy was. This was perhaps the most revealing question in relation to the level of awareness of Prevent across 'mainstream' policing. Although all of the PEOs, and Tier Two participants were able to answer this question easily and fully; most likely due to their role being so heavily linked to Prevent, only two of the PCs and PCSOs were able to give substantial answers, with most claiming their knowledge was *"minimal at best"* (Participant PC2). One NPT participant actually stated that prior to taking part in this research they had *"never heard of Prevent"* (Participant PCSO2). For the benefit of the research and developing dialogue, the interviewer provided a pre-written summary describing Prevent to the participants. This appeared to prompt some of the participant's memories who then recalled experiences of working with Prevent which varied from *"ticking a Prevent box when you fill out an intelligence report"* (Participant PCSO3), to having *"a training input a few years ago"* (Participant PC1). Further prompts asked participants if they had ever received training on Prevent, to which the response was mixed; some stated that they had but not recently, some stated that they had on entry into the police, and some stated that they could not recall ever being trained on

Prevent. Importantly, all of the participants were asked if they had conducted any sort of research or preparation to bolster their knowledge of the topic areas prior to the interview, to which they all stated that they had not. Whilst it would be meaningless to compare the level of understanding of Prevent across the participants' roles it was useful to compare and find that there was no apparent difference in the level of understanding across the case study areas. That said, this assumption is based on a particularly small sample of eight individual staff members across West Yorkshire.

Perhaps the most instrumental question in this section was *"how well do you think Prevent Policing and Neighbourhood Policing are integrated in your area?"* Although the overarching question remained the same for all participants, the prompts provided were slightly different as they were tailored to the roles of the participants. The responses to this question were particularly enlightening as two key themes emerged; firstly that there was a clear difference in how well integrated NPT participants felt compared to the PEOs and Tier Two participants, and secondly that all NPT participants felt that integration was weak but when prompted could cite positive examples of interaction.

None of the NPT participants felt that Prevent and Neighbourhood policing was well integrated in their area, although half did state that they had 'some level of integration'. Incidentally, the half that felt there was some integration were from the same two case study areas (one and three, Islamic and right wing). None of the NPT participants from case study two (Kurdish) or four (no specific vulnerability) felt there was any real integration. Although this is somewhat understandable for case study four, given there is no aligned PEO or specific vulnerability, it is interesting that case study two presented in this way. When the PEO, CCO, DS and DI participants were asked the same question, the responses were much more positive. These participants generally felt that "*there is a good level of integration but more could always be done*" (Participant DS5). The difference between how the NPT participants and the Prevent participants answered could simply be down to perspective; NPT staff by their nature must focus on

almost all elements of policing whilst PEOs, CCOs and the Prevent team DS and DIs are solely focused on Prevent and so they see the integration more clearly.

> *"NPT officers are the GPs of policing, they need to know enough about everything to get the job done, but Prevent teams are the specialists who focus on this one very niche area of policing"* (Participant DI5).

Although this statement was not made specifically in relation to this question the point remains; perhaps the NPTs and Prevent teams are integrated, but that it is more of a subconscious link for NPT PCs and PCSOs, and one that is much more overt and intentional for the Prevent staff. This idea could be supported by the fact that when asked prompt questions such as '*who would you go to if you had a Prevent related query or issue?'* Or *'do you know how to contact the Prevent team if needed?'* all of the NPT participants could answer these questions in a way that would be in line with West Yorkshire Police guidance, with some going further to cite examples of positive interactions between their NPT and Prevent teams.

> *"I don't know their names but they're just down the corridor and their door is always open, so to speak. I've bobbed in a couple of times to ask for advice and they're always more than happy to help."* (Participant PC3)

> *"If I needed to speak to somebody from Prevent I'd probably just search for an email address or phone number on the system and give them a call, I don't know who they are per se but I'd know how to get in touch with them."* (Participant PCSO4).

> *"We don't work with them every day, but **named PEO** is always calling into the office and tries to sit in on our briefings, so that works pretty well."* (Participant PC1).

Further discussions around this issue suggested that although NPT participants do not necessarily feel that there is a clear level of integration, they did all know how to contact the Prevent team, feed in information in the correct way, what sort of issues they would be interested in, and would ultimately feel comfortable in interacting; this suggests that the level of integration is perhaps higher than the early responses would portray. Analysis of responses across the case study areas does however allude to a lack of systematic integration; the relations between the two teams vary across the case studies and appear to be attributed more to the efforts and of individuals in these roles than to any organisational systems or standard practices for integration. Whilst this is encouraging in relation to the calibre of the individuals in these roles, it does potentially pose problems for the organisation with regards to consistency and resilience across West Yorkshire Police should these people move roles.

Responses to the final question of this section of the interview schedule appeared to compound this finding. The Tier One participants (only) were asked about their knowledge and involvement in Prevent activity in their local area. The interviewer stressed the importance of not mentioning any operationally sensitive information and explained that the purpose of this question was to understand what level of Prevent activity is ongoing and what level of involvement NPTs had in it. The responses to this question generally presented similar themes to the earlier answers; NPTs were aware of only a small proportion of specific activity, but knew that it was ongoing. PEOs could naturally provide more detail and claimed that NPTs had a higher level of awareness than was suggested by the NPT participants.

NPT Participant, case study three:

> *"I know they're quite active in the **named area** part of our beat and that they're always working with the Mosques. They'll tell us sometimes when they're doing a Mosque visit but that's about it."* (Participant PC3).

PEO Participant, case study three:

> *"We have an active programme of engagement with all our Mosques and community centres in **same area** which in short consists of visits, helping them with crime prevention, open days etc. we always inform the NPT sergeants beforehand and when its appropriate we'll take PCSOs along with us."* (Participant PEO3)

These two different accounts of what is apparently the same activity is revealing as it shows two very differing perspectives. This was reiterated across the case studies, on more than one occasion the NPT participants in a case study area could not provide any examples of Prevent work in their area, whilst the PEO for that area could provide an extensive overview of activity. Prompts to the PEO in particular asked whether NPTs had been made aware of this activity, if so how, and if not, why not. In the vast majority of the cases the PEO response was that the NPT had been made aware through briefings, in that either the PEO had attended the briefing in person to provide the information or had emailed through the plans to the Sergeant for inclusion. When the PEOs were asked how often they attended NPT briefings the responses varied across the case studies quite significantly from two a month to three times a week. This again suggests that a lack of systematic guidance on how the Prevent teams and NPTs should be integrating is causing differing practices and perceptions across the case study areas.

The local community

The third section of the interview schedule related to the participants' local community, in particular its needs and vulnerability to extremism. The first question was a fairly generic and was intended to put the interviewees at ease whilst gaging their level of familiarity with the communities in which they police, and simply asked how well they felt they knew their local community and its needs. The responses were vastly similar across roles and case study areas in that all participants felt confident that they knew their community and its needs well. One perhaps interesting theme to emerge was that the NPT participants all felt that they were less familiar with their communities

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now than in previous years, whilst the majority of PEOs (and CCOs) felt more confident in their local knowledge now than perhaps two years ago. When this was discussed further with NPT participants it linked back to the themes of the previous questions around additional demands being placed on NPTs and thus a lesser time available to engage;

> *"I'm supposed to be ward manager of **named area** but I barely get to spend any*
> *time there because I'm too busy covering everywhere else and responding to jobs.*
> *I should be spending most of my shift there, but I think last set [of shifts] I went there*
> *once for about 10 minutes."* (Participant PC4)

When the same question was explored further with PEOs and CCOs the findings were quite different in that they felt better resourced and supported now than in previous years:

> *"Prevent is gaining more and more momentum, the hard work is paying off and we're*
> *finally starting to shake off the old reputation of being anti-Muslim and a toxic brand.*
> *We're more open and honest now than we used to be, so communities who would*
> *once have nothing to do with us, ring us up and invite us to their events, they see*
> *that we're safeguarding now."* (Participant PEO1).

These two themes were apparent across almost all responses and are of particular significance to research aim three (*"to understand whether NPTs could and should be more involved in Prevent").* It would appear that whilst the work of Prevent teams is becoming less of a public battle, and thus more is being done, NPTs are being left with less capacity to do even the most basic levels of engagement. The wider shift in focus in policing from traditional neighbourhood policing priorities of anti-social behaviour and volume crime, to safeguarding the most vulnerable people in our communities will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight, but at this stage it is safe to say that this re-prioritisation has clearly had a

marked impact on the ability of NPTs to engage with their communities, even if it has been beneficial to Prevent teams. There was one exception to this theme which is particularly noteworthy. One of the PCSOs mentioned that they had fought hard to carry on with engagement work with local women's groups by offering to work in their own time, because their current workload made it too difficult to do everything required during their shifts. When the interviewer asked what sort of work this was the response given was;

> *"I worked with some local women from the South Asian community to set up a group a few years ago, a lady came to me, worried that there were more and more women at the school gates who couldn't speak English; together we set up a small group at the local centre and it's just grown and grown. It's more of a social group but it also teaches English lessons, helps with school applications, and they just talk about issues that matter to them. It's definitely helped these women feel less alone and more at home here, so I think it's important to keep that going no matter what."* (Participant PCSO2).

Although the participant was sharing this to make the point that demands on NPTs are hindering their ability to work with communities, there is potentially a more significant point. The work that this PCSO had done, is essentially a textbook example of Prevent engagement; it is a focused intervention with an isolated group of individuals, for the purposes of improving cohesion, building trust and confidence and reducing vulnerabilities. Of course the PCSO never mentioned any vulnerability to extremism and incidentally never linked this to Prevent, however fundamentally this is the same type of work. The fact that it had been carried out without any input from Prevent could be seen as a criticism of the relationship between the two teams, but it also shows that NPTs are capable of delivering Prevent style policing.

The next three questions in this section of the interview were intended to establish the participants' awareness of extremism and vulnerabilities within their communities. The interviewer initially asked whether the participant was aware of any parts of their community which were vulnerable to extremism.

It is important to note that the purpose of this question was not to check the responses for factual accuracy, but more to understand any similar or differing perspectives across the roles. Interestingly all of the PCSOs across all of the case studies answered '*yes*' to this stating that they did think certain elements of their community were vulnerable to extremism but only two out of four of the PCs did. Naturally all of the PEOs and Tier Two participants said yes. Perhaps what is also interesting is that, all of the PCSOs identified potential vulnerabilities to extremism within their local Muslim communities but no other community or form of extremism was noted (even in case studies three and four; 'right wing' and 'no specific vulnerability'). The PC from case study three identified a local community which could be vulnerable to right wing extremism, but only after they had talked for four minutes about the vulnerability of the local Muslim community first. When the NPT participants who had answered 'yes' were asked why they felt that, only two out of six stated briefings had influenced their view, whilst one said they got their information from the media, one said from experience, and two said they did not really know they just assumed. This again points to a lack of awareness of Prevent related issues across NPTs, and inconsistencies in how information is shared across teams. Encouragingly, the PEOs (and Tier Two participants) could all provide fuller evidence based responses identifying various vulnerable communities across the case studies in relation to multiple forms of extremism.

The next question followed on from this quite closely and was asked in order to broaden the discussion to include triggers and driving factors of vulnerability to extremism. The question included some examples of potential factors including poverty, racial tensions, and presence of controversial groups to direct the participants. Although this question was again answered with relative ease by the PEOs and Tier Two participants, it seemed to be a little more thought provoking for many of the NPT participants.

> *"I hadn't really thought about it in that way before, but yes I suppose there are a few*
>
> *communities who could go that way"* (Participant PC2)

The responses to this question were quite varied with many of the NPT participants visibly less keen to offer their thoughts, perhaps because of their lack of confidence around the topic area, or a reluctance to make assumptions about local communities based on the potential factors discussed "*I probably shouldn't cast aspersions*" (Participant PCSO4). It did however broaden the discussion from the talk of Muslim extremism to other forms of extremism; NPT participants from three of the case studies then identified communities in their local area who could potentially be vulnerable to right wing extremism, and one recalled a community group he had previously worked with that was supportive of the Palestinian cause and linked this to a potential vulnerability.

These discussions helped lead participants on to the final question in this section which was "*are there any communities in your local area which you think could be vulnerable to extremism but are showing good signs of resilience?*" Only two NPT participants answered 'yes' to this with the rest stating that they didn't know. Participant PCSO1 felt that a local Muslim community in a named area was "*doing some really good work to mix in with different groups and show that Muslims are good and not terrorists*", whilst Participant PC3 explained;

> "*The working class white community in this area have had their problems in the past, but I think now they're getting better. In fact a lot of them came to a community meeting a few months ago to oppose an EDL demo that was being planned. I know that some of these people used to go to National Front marches so that shows you how far they've come.*" (Participant PC3)

PEO and Tier Two participants were also able to provide some examples of communities that are getting stronger at (and showing more resilience to), extremism across the case study areas and the three forms of extremism that this research is focused on. A supplementary question asked whether the police had done anything to aid this resilience and although the PC and PCSO did not feel they knew enough to answer substantially, the PEOs and Tier Two participant provided a range of examples of work that the

Prevent team (and wider policing service) had done to assist. Coding of these responses roughly broke them down into three main categories; increased proactive engagement based on honest interactions, help around general policing issues such as crime prevention, and assistance with events. The interviewer asked the DS and DI whether they felt this sort of work could be done by NPT staff, to which they both answered 'yes' leading on to the final section of these interviews.

Neighbourhood policing in Prevent

The last section of questions in the interviews referred specifically to research aim three; to understand whether NPTs could or should play an increased role in the delivery of Prevent. Crucially, this section asked the participants, as experienced practitioners in both neighbourhood and Prevent policing, for their opinions and suggestions in this regard. The first question; "*what do you think the role of NPTs should be within preventing violent extremism in your area?*" was direct, and built upon earlier discussions in the interviews. The responses to this question varied in the detail provided, but there was a general consensus that participants felt NPTs should be more involved in the delivery of Prevent. The variations came when participants were asked what areas of work NPTs could increase involvement in. Whilst every participant felt that NPT officers and PCSOs should carry out more 'Prevent-focused' engagement and do more intelligence gathering there was a clear difference in opinion as to whether they should only be acting under the close supervision of the Prevent team, or whether they should be able to do the "*low-level Prevent stuff as part and parcel of their daily duties*" (Participant PC2).

Many of the participants who felt that NPT should be utilised more in Prevent based this on similarities between the community based policing models of Prevent policing and neighbourhood policing; these were recognised (un-prompted) in nine of the interviews:

> "*Prevent staff and NPT staff are doing the same work just with a slightly different audience. Prevent has had a bad reputation over the years but it's basically just community policing, yes it's more focused on certain communities where there may be*

a threat or vulnerability but that's no different to NPTs doing more patrols in high crime

areas." (Participant PEO1).

This acknowledgement of the similarities between the two forms of policing was generally qualified by the claim that it would not be too much of a reach to expect NPT staff to carry out more Prevent work. The majority of participants felt that NPTs and Prevent teams should carry out more joint engagement and that Prevent teams should use NPT officers to gather more intelligence on issues which are pertinent at the time:

> *"When Prevent officers are going into Mosques and community centres, we should be*
>
> *going with them whenever we can. It's our community too and we should be engaging*
>
> *with these groups too."* (Participant PC2)

and;

> *"One thing PCSOs are good at is submitting intelligence from the community, but the*
>
> *best intelligence is focused and actionable. Prevent should be telling us what they're*
>
> *interested in, so we know what's useful to them and what's not."* (Participant PCSO1)

Many of the participants (both NPT and Prevent based) felt that NPTs should be able to carry-out this sort of work with guidance but not direct supervision from the Prevent teams, however of the participants who felt that NPTs should be more involved, but under supervision, the majority stressed that this was because of sensitivities around Prevent:

> *"We've worked really hard to show that Prevent isn't spying, and that we can be trusted,*
>
> *but there's still a lot of wariness in communities. All it takes is one over keen police officer*
>
> *or PCSO to go into a situation they don't understand and create tensions that we'll then*
>
> *have to try and fix."* (Participant CCO5).

This links back to the underlying question of this research aim, 'is Prevent a specialist area which only expert officers should be responsible for, or is Prevent the responsibility of all members of West Yorkshire Police and should be 'mainstreamed' accordingly?' It is also important to note, that this apprehension was not only shown by the Prevent based participants; many of the NPT participants also raised concerns about their lack of understanding and knowledge of Prevent and related issues. The interviewer asked whether participants felt comfortable in talking to members of the public about cultural, political and religious issues. The vast majority said 'yes,' however there was a lower level of confidence with the NPT participants than with the Prevent staff. Many of the NPT PCs and PCSOs said 'yes' but added a caveat such as *"only if it was something I knew about"* (Participant PC3). This issue was illustrated further in the responses to the final question; *"Do you think anything would have to change for NPTs to become more involved in Prevent?"* All of the responses provided included the need for additional training and information sharing so that the NPT staff could feel comfortable and confident in having potentially difficult conversations on sensitive issues.

> *"I think most officers would want to feel like they can have these conversations, it's our job to talk to people about their concerns and solve problems, we want to be able to do that regardless of the topic, but I personally don't feel like I could do that without some training around Prevent, and a lot more information from the team."* (Participant PC2)

Whilst the solution to this issue appears to be quite logical; provide more training and input to NPTs if they are to play an increased role, this suggestion also highlighted another logistical problem. The second question of this section asked whether anything would have to change for NPTs to be more involved in Prevent. Again the issues around training and improving confidence were raised, but more crucially, the issue of capacity re-emerged.

> *"I would love to do more work around Prevent and be more engaged in these communities, but unfortunately, I just haven't got the time. We already can't do our own engagement, let alone specialised Prevent engagement."* (Participant PCSO4)

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"I don't think I'd even have the time to do the training right now, let alone actually put it into practice." (Participant PC1)

This was a resounding statement made in nearly all of the interviews, although some participants were more positive than others, "*we'd make it work, because that's what we do.*" (Participant PC3), the point remains, that if NPTs were to become more involved in the delivery of Prevent there would have to be much bigger changes to their current roles and duties to allow for this increased responsibility.

Overall, this section of the interviews showed that whilst there is clearly an appetite for NPTs to become more involved in the delivery of Prevent, there are some serious concerns about how this would work in practice. The debate still remains as to whether Prevent is a specialism that should be left to trained officers, and whether NPTs have the capability or capacity to effectively deliver Prevent at present. It is also worth noting that there were no clear differences in how participants answered these questions in relation to their case study area, suggesting that the issues raised are West Yorkshire wide. There were some differences in how participants from different roles responded in relation to the level of responsibility that should be given to NPTs, however again, the concerns raised around confidence and capability were spread proportionately across the participants.

Summary

<u>Neighbourhood policing</u>

Responses to the questions around neighbourhood policing revealed two key findings pertinent to the research aims; West Yorkshire Police is under significant pressure to deliver neighbourhood policing because of increasing demand and reducing resources, and that this is having a negative impact on how the police engage with and build cohesion within communities. Participants repeatedly stressed how changes to their working environment such as shift-patterns and workloads were hindering their

ability to be present within their communities and how they felt out of touch with the local issues. It was suggested that if prioritised, West Yorkshire Police could use Prevent as a way to improve relations between the police and public; if Prevent was to be 'mainstreamed' across neighbourhood policing, the increased levels of community engagement could help to rebuild relations and improve cohesion.

Prevent

The discussions around Prevent provided a mixed picture; the initial awareness and levels of understanding of Prevent across NPT participants appeared to be minimal. However, each of the participants were able to outline how they would identify and engage with the Prevent team, if needed, to a satisfactory standard. This provides a level of reassurance that the police workforce is competent enough to deal with issues even if they fall outside of their specialism. It does, however, also pose questions around resilience, structures and consistency of practices across West Yorkshire Police as an organisation. These interview responses were integral to research aim two; 'what is the current role of NPTs in Prevent?' and it was interesting to note the different perspectives on the levels of integration between Prevent and NPTs, with many Prevent participants feeling that the levels of integration were sufficient, whilst the NPT participants generally wanted more interaction. Although this provides a great insight into the current practices and role of NPTs in Prevent, ultimately, this debate would not be resolved through these interviews alone, as the bigger question needs to be answered first; 'what should the role of NPTs be in the delivery of Prevent?'

Local communities

This section of the interviews provided the opportunity to explore some of the earlier points in more detail, particularly around the integration and information sharing between Prevent and neighbourhood policing. Many of the NPT participants again reiterated that their local knowledge has deteriorated over the past few years, as their workload and priorities have shifted away from proactive engagement. Although this is an issue across all forms of community engagement, it is clearly more apparent with

regards to engaging with vulnerable or hard to reach communities in their area, which many participants felt that they had even less knowledge of. This was contrasted in the responses from PEOs and CCOs who were able to provide quite full, evidence based responses to the questions about their local communities and the issues that they faced. This ultimately poses the question of information sharing between the two policing departments. Whilst the Prevent officers claimed that they provided regular briefings and inputs to the NPTs, it was clear from their own estimations that this varied significantly across the case study areas, suggesting that more could be done to formalise the information sharing processes between teams for the good of the local community.

NPTs and the Prevent Strategy

The concluding section of the interviews related directly to research aim three, posing the question to the participants; *"what do you think the role of NPTs should be within preventing violent extremism in your area?"* The responses to this were varied, and although every participant said that NPTs should do more to help deliver Prevent, there were different opinions regarding how this should happen in practice. In addition to this, the issues of capability and capacity were raised; generally participants (regardless of role or case study area) felt that even if NPTs were to be instructed to do more around Prevent, there would be a lack of confidence amongst some NPT staff to have the difficult conversations and carry out the more bespoke engagement required for Prevent. The final and perhaps more difficult to overcome obstacle related to the workloads and demands alluded to earlier in the interviews; ultimately participants felt unable to carry out community policing for general purposes to the level that they would like, let alone take on more the more complex responsibility of delivery Prevent focused community policing.

To conclude, the interviews were very useful in uncovering some of the key issues relating to research aims two and three. They provided the opportunity to ask experienced practitioners in both neighbourhood policing and Prevent delivery crucial questions in relation to how the two areas compliment and differ. Perhaps the most significant finding was that although the results from the

interviews suggest that NPTs <u>should</u> play an increased role in the delivery of Prevent, considerable changes would have to happen to create a policing environment where NPTs <u>could</u> do more to deliver Prevent.

Chapter Four

Focus Groups with community participants

The mixed methodological approach adopted in the thesis included semi-structured interviews, activity reports, observations and focus groups. There were many benefits to using this combination, most importantly it provided multiple data sets covering the key research aims and helped to capture the different perspectives of the participants. It also allowed for triangulation across the datasets to help verify and in some cases reinforce the findings, crucially the different methods were used to further investigate suppositions at different levels meaning that the overall results of the research had increased coverage and were comprehensive, overcoming the limitations of using any of the methods in isolation. Each of the methodologies was chosen to provide different data around each of the three research aims:

1. To investigate the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy.
2. To identify the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy.
3. To assess whether NPTs should and could be utilised differently within the delivery of Prevent.

Focus groups were chosen to specifically inform research aims one and two but would also touch on research aim three. Focus groups can be defined as "*a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research*" (Powell et al, 1996, p.501). The techniques used during focus groups can be described to some extent as a mix between interviewing and observing; a successful focus group is largely dependent on active participation from all members of the group, so the facilitator must be able to generate healthy discussions centred on the intended topic whilst allowing conversation to feel natural and supportive. In order to maintain concentration on the research aims, focus group facilitators often use a series of pre-planned questions with discussion prompts, meaning that a focus group is less of an open conversation

and more of a structured consultation, *"the researcher follows an interview guide in a focus group. In this sense focus groups are not natural but organised events."* (Gibbs, 1997, p.1).

Focus groups have been historically used for the purposes of market research but are also a useful tool within the social sciences (Smithson, 2000). They provide the opportunity to generate qualitative data sets specific to the research questions and allow further exploration of the views, feelings and experiences of multiple individuals during the same session. This not only has benefits in efficiency but also generates relationship dynamics between group members (Krueger and Casey, 2000) which can often lead to deeper discussions than would be naturally occurring in an interview or observation session (Gibbs, 1997). Whilst focus groups present certain challenges for the facilitator such as the need to control and direct discussion without influencing the statements made, or maintaining balance between overly vocal and more hesitant participants, they do provide the opportunity to delve further into issues raised; *"focus groups elicit information in a way which allows researchers to find out why an issue is salient, as well as what is salient about it"* (Morgan, 1988, p.74). This methodology is also helpful in understanding the differences in opinions between the participants in the group, *"the interaction also enables participants to ask questions of each other"* (Kitzinger, 1994, p.114), and gage the level of agreement on set issues *"focus groups are very valuable in providing access to consensus or diversity of experiences on a topic"* (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006, p1.)

One limitation of focus groups is that whilst useful in understanding the opinions and experiences of the group, the small sample sizes mean that it can be difficult to draw safe inferences about how the community as a whole feels, for further discussion around the relationship between samples and populations see (Etikan et, al, 2016; Gibbs, 1997). Other concerns relate to the management of more dominant individuals who can sometimes hinder the willingness of others to speak out and provide input, furthermore even in a friendly environment some individuals may be hesitant to speak openly in front of others particularly if the group is made up of their peers. To ensure that the impact of these potential

limitations was minimised as effectively as possible, the researcher took on the role of facilitator and employed the help of a neutral assistant. This allowed each session to be managed in a way that encouraged all members to contribute whilst ensuring that no individual overshadows or intimidates others. It is important to note that whilst there are issues to overcome, there are also additional benefits of focus groups for the participants involved; people may feel pleased to have been consulted with (Gibbs, 1997), considered to be experts (Goss & Leinbach, 1996) and feel empowered that they are contributing to potential change (Race et al. 1994). Given the strong community focus of this research, it seemed pertinent to include focus groups consisting of members of the communities in question in the research strategy.

Four focus groups were conducted with members of the public; one in each of the case study areas. The key purpose was to provide a community perspective of neighbourhood policing and Prevent in the very communities which had been identified as vulnerable to extremism, the process used to recruit suitable participants is outlined below. Although the other techniques such as observations and interviews with police officers provided some understanding of public opinion in these areas, this was largely second-hand and unverified; holding focus groups with community members helped capture the views of community members formally and directly, and crucially provided the only data set from a community perspective within a research programme which is otherwise relatively police orientated.

The main purpose of the focus groups was to understand, from a community perspective, how the delivery of local and Prevent policing affected communities. In order to cover these research aims the participants were asked a series of questions to prompt discussions regarding how they felt about their local NPTs, cohesion and community issues in their area, what their awareness of Prevent was, and what they thought were key priorities for the police in preventing violent extremism. From these discussions, the judgements could be made in relation to the three research aims about whether the police engagement was valued by these communities, what level of involvement both the local NPTs and

Prevent teams had within these areas, and whether the communities could benefit from increased interaction between NPTs and Prevent. In addition to providing information pertinent to the research aims, holding focus groups in each of the case study areas would also provide comparative information which could be used to assess how the NPTs and Prevent teams engage with the different vulnerable communities, identifying any areas for improvement or examples of best practice, which is essentially one of the fundamental goals of the entire research.

Planning

When designing the wider research strategy and focus group plan, consideration was given to a number of factors to ensure that the research was valid, reliable and ethical. These included both epistemological and practical considerations which have ultimately directed the overall research strategy and determined how focus groups were used within it. This section of the chapter outlines these considerations and the decisions made.

<u>Number of focus groups</u>

The decision was made that one focus group per case study area would provide sufficient data for the research and would achieve a justifiable balance between gaining the perspective of the vulnerable community and collating good quality usable information with the time and resources available. Academic guidance on the use of focus groups in research (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Morgan,1997) suggests that three to four focus groups on one topic is sufficient to produce valid results without reaching the point of saturation (Eliot et al, 2005). Aside from increasing the chances of obtaining views from a wider cross-section of the community, it was not thought that carrying out additional focus groups would improve the quality of the data obtained here. However, choosing to conduct only one group per case study did put added importance on ensuring that the participants were selected could accurately present the issues and concerns of people living in the vulnerable community in question.

It would be unreasonable to suggest that any one group could ever reflect the views of an entire community, however this is not the purpose of holding a focus group, rather the aim is to bring together people with shared experiences or characteristics to provide opinions and insights on the topic in question. In this instance the shared characteristic was that the participants were members of the communities at the heart of each case study which had already been identified according to a comprehensive criteria and preliminary research. This effectively made the selection of participants somewhat easier given the narrow geographical areas and communities in question; i.e. the case study in Leeds was based on the Kurdish community in the selected NPT area.

There is a wealth of literature regarding the benefits of homogeneity across the group as it helps to *"maximise disclosure amongst focus group participants"* (Eliot et al, 2005, p.3). It is recommended that a selection criteria pays particular attention to gender, age, power (position), and social status. Whilst there are others who suggest that heterogeneous groups and participants who do not know each other reduces the risk of peer pressure, and limits the chance of conformity within the group (Steward and Shamdasani, 1990) it was felt that, given the needs of this research to understand how policing practices affect pre-determined communities around sensitive topics, it was felt that a degree of homogeneity across the group would be beneficial in minimizing potential conflict and providing common experiences to explore through discussion (or wider debate see Hines, 2008). For this reason, a selection criteria for the participants included that they were over 18 years of age (for ethical reasons) and ideally formed part of natural, pre-existing social group. Although the latter point was not crucial it was thought that this would not only help from a logistical perspective, but would also benefit the level of discussions as the participants would feel more comfortable discussing such issues with people that they know, and would share similar experience and understanding of the relevant issues in each area "*existing and homogeneous groups are generally more comfortable and open with each other*" (Keown, 1983, p.6). For the purpose of this research, it was felt that recruiting participants which were males between 18-30 years

of age would be most beneficial; as highlighted in the literature review, many suggest that this age group is the most vulnerable to radicalisation (*for wider discussion see Kummer, 2012, why do young men fight wars?*). Essentially the point of the focus groups are to gain the perspective of those who are vulnerable to extremism, therefore it seems logical to focus on these demographics.

Recruitment of focus group participants can be conducted through a number of strategies including nomination, random selection, existing social groups and advertising for volunteers (Morgan, 1998). For the purposes of this research it was felt that random selection and advertisement would not be a suitable way of identifying appropriate members from the vulnerable communities in question. Instead, the entire research strategy was designed in two stages with the intention that the findings of the first stage (activity reports and officer interviews) would feed into the second stage (focus and working groups).

It was intended that in starting the research with officer interviews and activity reports, potential groups which could be of use to the research could be identified based on their existing involvement with the NPTs and/or Prevent teams in these areas would be identified. This technique proved to be successful and multiple potential participants became apparent from the early results, for example in case study two a number of pre-existing Kurdish groups with varying levels of police engagement came to light, this was mirrored in both case studies one and three. Although this two-stage method was useful in identifying potentially suitable participants, the risk attached to relying entirely on police suggestion (nomination) was acknowledged. To minimise any impartial influence, alternative groups identified through independent enquiries (into local groups and networks who may be of interest), were also identified in order to avoid the selection of participants being solely dependent on police contact. Once a list of potential participants had been collated, the groups were assessed as to their overall suitability and those which were considered the most suitable were approached. In case studies two and three, the groups were chosen out of options which had emerged through the first stage of the research as it was felt that these was still the most appropriate based on their demographic make-up, however in case studies one

and four the participants were chosen from separate enquiries. The details of the focus group will be summarised later in this chapter but in brief;

- Case study focus group one: Participants were part of a pre-existing Islamic study group of young Asian males between 18-25 years of age and who had mixed perceptions and levels involvement with the police.
- Case study focus group two: Participants were part of a local Kurdish community association comprised of Kurdish males between the ages of 21-34 years of age, again the participants had mixed experiences and contact with the police.
- Case study focus group three: Participants were part of an amateur rugby team located in the NPT area known to have cohesion issues and a higher than average level of support for right-wing groups, they were all white males between the age of 19-26 years.
- Case study focus group four: Participants were also part of an amateur rugby team located in the NPT area identified as most closely reflecting the national and West Yorkshire average in the pre-determined indicators for vulnerability to extremism. The participants were all of mixed ethnicity and nationality (but had a white British majority) and were aged between 18-32 years.

Twelve pre-existing groups were identified through the process outlined above, however it is important to note that six of these groups either declined to participant or were deemed unsuitable for various reasons following the initial enquiries. In some instances, it was felt that the groups had too much prior involvement (either positive or negative) with the police to provide an impartial perspective in comparison to the levels of involvement across the wider community. Whilst the relationship with the police was not a prerequisite for selection, there was a risk that individuals who had strong relationships with the local police or Prevent teams through proactive community work which was above the typical standard within these communities would not provide the most balanced reflections on some of the topics being discussed. Similarly where potential participants came to light through their appearance in activity reports or interviews for more

negative reasons; i.e. reports of potential radicalisation or challenging police-community relations, it again was felt that this may not be fairly representative of wider perspectives within the community.

Some of the groups approached were not willing to take part in the research, of those that provided reasons, the most common theme was hesitance due to the sensitivities around the topic matter and their fear of openly voicing negative opinions about the police. Another factor which became apparent was that when using existing social groups, some of the individuals approached raised concerns about speaking openly amongst peers about controversial topics. Furthermore one representative who runs a diversionary group for young adults that have been identified as vulnerable to radicalisation, declined the invitation to take part as he felt that having these open and challenging conversations may un-do a lot of the progress that they have made as a group with regards to viewing issues in a more positive light. Identifying a willing and suitable group for case study one (vulnerability to Islamist extremism) proved to be the most difficult; the early research had only revealed one viable option but they chose not to participate when approached, similarly three of the groups identified through independent enquiries also opted not to take part and were clearly hesitant to speak openly about the sensitive issues of extremism or the local police. Although one cannot read too much into this for risk of jumping to unfounded assumptions, it is interesting that this community were so much more difficult to engage with. Had there not had been enough willing volunteers following this approach, consideration would have been given to the other options and efforts would have been made to advertise the research more widely in these communities potentially with an added financial incentive to take part, however it was not necessary.

Focus group sizes

The aim was for each focus group to have between six and eight participants. Although larger numbers were considered for the purpose of collecting data from a wider cross-section of people, factors including the ease of organisation, cost, availability of large pre-established social groups, and practicalities of recording larger discussions resulted in the decision to limit the size of the groups to eight participants.

More importantly personal experience and leading literature on the use of focus groups in social research (Baumgartner, Strong, & Hensley, 2002; 2004; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Langford, Schoenfeld, & Izzo, 2002; Morgan, 1997; Barbour, 2007) suggested that groups of six to ten were more likely to produce fruitful discussions, without either inhibiting less confident participants, or being too small to provide any depth or diversity to the discussions. Furthermore, preliminary discussions with community members suggested that the participants would not only be familiar with the topic area but would have a wealth of personal experience to draw on in discussions, it was therefore felt that introducing any more than eight participants would potentially have led to difficulties in providing every person with a platform to talk and could have resulted in frustrations within the group. It is also worth mentioning that once each of the case study groups had been identified and had confirmed their willingness to take part in the research, at least eight participants were invited (in some cases up to ten), this over-recruitment gave a degree of resilience for those who cancelled at short notice. It proved to be the correct decision as last minute cancellations across some of the groups meant that there was a minimum of six participants and a maximum of eight in each session.

<u>Duration</u>

Whilst planning the focus group agenda, the need for flexibility to accommodate different levels of engagement in each of the groups was valued. Therefore the agendas for the focus groups were designed to be between 45-60 minutes long, but facilities would be booked for longer to take into account late arrivals, over-running and to provide the opportunity for participants to talk to the facilitator afterwards should they want to discuss issues in a more private setting. A review of academic literature and practitioner guidance (Powell and Single, 1996; Eliot 2007; Krueger 2002), suggested that this would be a reasonable amount of time to ask participants to commit, taking into consideration additional travel time. Most importantly it was felt that, if planned correctly, 60 minutes would be ample time to discuss the relevant topics in an in depth and constructive way, therefore it was decided that the agendas would concentrate on just four key sections (detailed later), this concise structure would mean that the

discussions would hopefully be more focussed but without feeling rushed. Another factor in the decision for not choosing a shorter or longer duration for the groups was that personal experience and literature suggested that it is much harder to maintain a level of interest and engagement with participants for periods longer than 60 minutes, similarly it was not thought that a shorter time would allow for discussions of a suitable depth for this level of research.

Ethical considerations

<u>Recording of the sessions</u>

Considerations relating to the recording of the sessions were centred around the need to keep an accurate record of the discussions whilst balancing the need to abide by legal and ethical guidance on the storage and retention of anonymised records. It was decided that no audio or visual recordings would be taken during the sessions as it might hinder the participant's willingness to speak openly if they do not have complete trust in the facilitator (Al-Yateem, 2012). Given the sensitivities of the topics in question and initial conversations with the group representatives it was thought that the participants would prefer not to be recorded. It was also felt that between the facilitator and the assistant, an accurate record of all discussions could be made. A number of steps were taken to enable this. Firstly, the facilitator would use flipcharts and write down key bullet points of discussion at the time, and in front of the participants allowing them time to correct or challenge the record made. A3 sheets of paper and scoring sheets were also provided on the tables for participants to essentially record the results of each question as they worked through them, which would all be presented to the group (and facilitator) during the feedback session and also collated at the end. Straw polls and visual aids were also used to allow for the quick tallying up of responses by the facilitator without detracting from the flow of discussions. Perhaps the most important step taken to ensure a full and accurate record was that the facilitator and assistant scheduled time in immediately after each session to write up their understanding of what happened and what the key points and results from the focus group were. This was initially conducted in isolation to ensure integrity and then combined to provide a holistic perspective of the focus group sessions. It is important to note that

whilst there may have been some slight differences in the interpretations of the discussions between the facilitator and assistant, all statistical results were the same in each account, and matched the records made at the time. The facilitator and assistant were also careful to write a note of specific body language, tone, key statements and indicators of consensus during the session and also included a reflective section of write up relating to how they felt the session went, what worked well, what did not, and what their overall impression was.

<u>Anonymity</u>

Given the sensitivities of the topics covered in discussions it was crucial that the identities of the participants were protected. Whilst full anonymity is somewhat dependant on the participants adhering to confidentiality arrangements, *"the higher number of participants in a focus group increases the risk of members breaching confidentiality agreements"* (McParland & Flowers, 2012, p.496), steps were taken by the facilitator to protect the identity of those in the group. The importance of confidentiality was made clear to participants before they were asked to give formal consent and each focus group session opened with an explanation as to the rules and importance of confidentiality. Whilst name badges were used within the sessions, these were destroyed immediately afterwards, all references made to individuals and their comments in the write up and analysis used aliases, and any statements made by the participants which could potentially make them identifiable were sanitized. The decision not to record the focus groups visually or audibly was also influenced by the need to protect anonymity; in order to abide by ethical guidelines, the recording would have needed to be transcribed as soon as practicable afterwards and stored securely in the meantime, then deleted. The fact that this was not necessary helped the efficiency of the analysis period following the focus group sessions and also alleviated any concerns amongst participants regarding their anonymity.

<u>Facilitator involvement</u>

The researcher took on the role of facilitator for the focus groups, and careful consideration was given to the level of involvement that the facilitator would have with the group beforehand and during the focus group session. It was crucial that the facilitator acted in a way which was engaging enough to create a comfortable atmosphere, maintain the focus of discussions and encourage participation. But it was also crucial that the facilitator did not act in a way which could influence the group or hinder the validity of the results either through being too authoritative or too relaxed. To achieve this balance, an informal approach was adopted during each session in an attempt to generate an open and social feeling. The help of an assistant was also enlisted for added safety and to help with the facilitation and recording of the group. The assistant was fully briefed beforehand on what would be required of them, which was ultimately to provide practical support, help to engage with the participants, and help to record the information. Given the sensitive nature of the topic area and the focus on fairly serious issues relating to policing and government policy, it was important that the participants felt that their opinions would be valued and would ultimately feed into positive change, as opposed to being questioned as part of an inspection or investigation. Consequently the purpose of the research was made clear at the beginning of the process and a range of methodologies to promote positive engagement and gain constructive contributions to the research aims were utilised; these included varying the different styles of questioning, using visual aids and communication tools throughout the sessions to stimulate involvement and vary the type of data produced as recommended in key literature (see Krueger & Casey 2000, Homan 1991).

<u>Encouraging engagement</u>

In order to improve the chances of positive engagement during the group, the facilitator aimed to build up a base relationship with the participants before the session explaining the intentions beforehand. In all cases, this began with the initial contact which was made when first requesting their participation. In case studies two, three and four, this consisted of telephone calls to a representative from the group, whilst in case study one the approach was made via email. The facilitator then met with key

representatives to discuss the plan for the focus group where they were able to explain the plan in more detail and answer any questions, the representative was then asked to relay this information to their group for consideration before confirming whether they were willing to participate. One of the key benefits of using pre-established social groups (such as rugby teams, community based clubs etc.) was that liaison was only required with one member per group who then helped to organise the session, and who were trusted by the other participants. This not only made the process much more efficient, but also meant that the participants could discuss whether they wanted to take part, away from the facilitator without feeling under pressure to commit. It was also clearly beneficial during the sessions as the participants appeared to have some familiarity with the facilitator even though they had not actually met before.

Another tactic to promote engagement was to hold the sessions in venues already utilised by the groups (Eliot, 2007). Although this did have practical benefits, the main reason was that the participants would naturally feel more at ease in a familiar setting. Each location was visited beforehand to ensure that they were safe and suitable, this also provided the opportunity to plan the set-up of the group. All of the groups were held in private rooms where the participants could feel comfortable speaking openly, and where the seating could be rearranged easily to suit the different stages of the session. There were three distinct stages of the focus group sessions which will be detailed later, however in brief the group started with the participants sitting in a semi-circle in clear view of a flip chart during introductions and opening discussions, the group was then split off into pairs at a table where they could write easily, and finally the group was brought back into a semi-circle for closing discussions. During the group discussion stages, the facilitator also sat down to avoid inadvertently dominating the group, this also ensured that the participant's view would not be obstructed, and made it easier to write notes. When the participants were paired off, the facilitator intentionally waited until the participants had begun discussing between themselves before circulating between the sub-groups. This was a useful opportunity to talk to each

participant in a more private way to discuss their thoughts and encouraged them to raise any issues or concerns that they may not want to do in the larger group conversations.

One further consideration when facilitating positive engagement related to language barriers; given the diversity of the participants involved it was crucial to ensure that all participants would be able to communicate effectively within the group. To do so, the each representative was asked when planning the sessions whether there would be anyone with any language or other communication issues. This was only evident in two of the focus groups whereby some of the participants were not fluent in English but could understand and speak a good level. This was not a significant issue as the representatives from both groups were confident that they could act as translators should any participants struggle with the language, however to negate the issue further the decision was taken to ensure that each of these individuals would be paired up with a good English speaker when working in smaller groups. Moreover, all questions were purposely presented in clear and simple language, singular sentences and without local idioms or expressions which could cause confusion, similarly when using the flip-board or hand-outs the facilitator made sure to use a clear and basic font / handwriting. Perhaps the most conscious decision made to overcome this issue was the use of different tools during the session such as yes/no flags, straw-polling, etc. however these will be outlined later.

Questioning styles

Throughout the course of the focus groups a combination of different questioning styles were used including open and closed questions, straw-polling, complimentary and argumentative submissions, and private discussions. The use of each of these tactics was determined during the planning for the focus groups with the understanding that different topics or stages within the agenda would warrant different approaches. Whilst it is common practice to use open ended questions in focus groups (Bloor, 2001; Gibbs, 1997; Krueger & Casey, 2007) as they encourage more detailed answers and greater opportunity for exploration, the language barrier for some participants meant that it was also important to include

simple questions included those that can be answered by 'yes or no' or with a green or red flag. Each session had four key sections to it (in addition to introductions and conclusions), each section was dedicated to a particular topic (detailed below), and the most suitable questioning style for each was chosen, a summarised copy of the focus group session plan can be found at appendix D. The agenda was structured in the following order:

- Part one: Opening and introductions (setting out the purpose of the group and its boundaries).

- Part two: Community cohesion (asking how participants feel within their community; series of closed questions).

- Part three: Police relations (asking for opinions and experiences of their local police; asking for three positive and three negative statements in pairs).

- Part four: Perceptions of extremism (asking for participant's view on extremism in general; group exercise with series of statements where they are required to grade on level of agreement).

- Part five: Role of the local police in preventing extremism (open ended question; answers recorded and explored further on flipchart as a group).

The order of these sections was intentionally designed to begin with less controversial topics in order to build trust and comfort levels and encourage participation from all, before gradually leading on to topics which were linked but perhaps more sensitive. More detail will now be provided as to each of the questioning styles and tactics used in these sections.

Implementation

Opening and introductions

The session was opened by the facilitator introducing themselves and the assistant, thanking the participants for their attendance, and outlining the purpose of the focus group and wider research. The facilitator was keen to keep this opening to no more than five minutes to maintain the interest of the group and make the most of the time available. Before the main session begun, the facilitator managed the

administrative side of the focus groups which included the signing of consent forms and providing a short briefing regarding the boundaries of the group, confidentiality expectations and their right to withdraw from the research. In addition to serving an administrative purpose, the opening five minutes of the session also allowed the facilitator to set a relaxed tone for the rest of the session. A common challenge in facilitating focus groups is ensuring that all members of the group have the opportunity to speak and are listened to. Knowing that there would be different levels of participation across the groups, attempts were made to ensure and encourage more introvert people to take part by asking everybody to say a few sentences about themselves at the start of the session. This prompted participants to break their silence early on, and improved familiarity between the facilitator and participants. It should be noted that the participants were asked at the start of the session if they were comfortable with sharing this information and would not have included this stage had any individual declined. Name tags were also used for participants to fill in, this was solely to aid more personal interaction between the facilitator and the group.

Throughout the remainder of the session, participants were generally polite and respectful and rarely spoke over each other. However, to ensure that more introvert personalities felt comfortable, the facilitator paid close attention to body language and employed active listening techniques such as eye contact, verbal acknowledgement and reflection. When it was thought that a certain participant wanted to speak, encouraging prompts were used such as asking if they had anything to add. In contrast there were some participants who were more vocal than others, although this was not at a disruptive or detrimental level, it did mean that they needed more management to keep the conversation on track. To combat this, the facilitator made sure to summarise frequently, and referred back to the questions, writing down the participant's key points on the flip chart to reinforce that they had made their opinion known and it had been captured.

<u>Community cohesion</u>

The first substantial section of the focus groups centred on the area of community cohesion. Poor cohesion is recognised as a driving factor in a community's vulnerability to extremism (Innes & Jones 2006), as such it was deemed crucial to gather the participant's perspectives on what cohesion was like in their communities and exploring what they thought was aiding or hindering it. Fifteen minutes was dedicated to this section, the overarching aim was to understand how participants felt about the community in which they live. The facilitator decided to open up the discussions with this topic as it was considered the least contentious area, and would therefore ease the participants into open conversation before moving on to the more sensitive issues.

To ascertain the participants' views relating to cohesion in their area, the facilitator opted to ask them five questions ranging from a fairly generic "*are you happy with where you live?*" to a more specific "*do you think there are any elements of the community which do not integrate well*?" The facilitator chose to obtain answers to these questions by using a 'yes' or 'no' voting system utilising small flags each with a green yes side and a red no side. There were multiple reasons for this; firstly it was thought that it would help to overcome any language issues as mentioned previously particularly with regards to the use of red and green colours, secondly limiting the answers to yes or no initially would help to track the results before exploring the reasons why afterwards, finally it was intended that using the flags as props would encourage active participation as all participants would be putting the flag up for each question, furthermore it would limit the chance of embarrassment or pressure compared to a tradition 'hands-up vote' if only one person wanted to put their hand up to answer yes or no.

Taking this approach meant that the facilitator could quickly and easily ascertain the participant's opinions on each question, and then follow up with more in depth discussion by asking participants to explain the reasons for their answers. The facilitator recorded the results by keeping a tally on the flipchart, where appropriate, prompts such as "*would anybody like to say a bit more on that point?*" or "*why do you feel*

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that way?" were used to gather more detailed information which the facilitator and assistant took notes on. This strategy worked well and helped to overcome some potential language barriers and eased the nerves of some participants.

<u>Police relations</u>

The second key section of the focus group concentrated on police relations and was separated into two halves; the first half focused on the overall perspective of their local police, whilst the second half looked at awareness and understanding of Prevent policing. This was structured this way in order to create a discussion about police in general before moving on to the potentially more contentious area of Prevent. For this part of the session the participants were split into two or three smaller groups (depending on size) and asked to come up with three positive things and three negative things about the policing in their local area. Steps were taken to ensure that those with weak or little English language or writing skills were in groups with those able to translate and scribe to guarantee that all perspectives were obtained.

At this stage the facilitator reiterated that no answers would be attributed to them in any way. In order to ensure that all responses were captured, the participants were asked to write down their answers on their packs, these would be collected at the end and kept in accordance ethical and legal guidelines. The participants were given five minutes to discuss and record their thoughts, during which the facilitator walked around the groups to listen to the participants and make notes of any interesting points. Each group was then asked to share their statements, and the researcher wrote each one down on a flip chart. Where necessary, the participants were asked to elaborate on their answers giving reasons and examples for context. Although the discussions would be limited to the presenting group and the facilitator, once all groups had provided their answers the conversation was opened up between all participants.

The facilitator used six additional questions around whether they would feel comfortable talking to the police, and if they thought the police treat people with respect. Participants were asked to simply vote 'yes' or 'no' for each of the statements again using the green and red flags, however time was allowed for discussion in between, notes of which were taken and used in the analysis, along with the participant packs, and flipcharts.

The second half of this section aimed to gain the participants views on Prevent. The facilitator intentionally chose not to overtly record the participants' answers to this on the flip chart in order to limit the risk of discouraging open conversation on the potentially sensitive issue. Understandably some participants may not wish to divulge to the group that they had some involvement with Prevent or had any greater understanding of the area than anybody else for fear of incriminating themselves or admitting to associating with Prevent officers. For this reason, this section of the focus group was limited to asking participants to use the flags to answer if they have heard of Prevent, before asking for willing volunteers to explain their understanding of it to the group. In the event that no participant could/would do so, the facilitator would then briefly explain what Prevent was from a pre-written (non-leading) definition. In order to avoid limiting the discussion to participants who had answered, and to involve more participants, the facilitator then asked if anybody had any experience or understanding of wider engagement or community cohesion teams within the police. This would ultimately allow the facilitator to probe further into the participants' awareness of police cohesion and engagement work in their areas and may reveal interesting comparisons and perceptions even if cannot be directly attributed to Prevent policing.

Repeating the use of the flags worked well as the participants were familiar and comfortable with the concept by this point. Splitting off into the smaller groups and asking the participants to work together to come up with positive and negative statements about the police was slightly more complex and required a deeper level of consideration from the participants. Although there were initially concerns regarding potential language barriers, this did not prove to be an issue due to the careful pairing of participants. It

was however noted, that if this strategy was employed in future focus groups, more time should be given to allow participants to provide well thought out statements, it is also interesting to note that many of the groups struggled to provide three negative statements, although on first thoughts this may seem like a positive reflection on policing in their local area, it could also be due to a hesitance of the participants to openly criticize the police.

Views on extremism

The penultimate section of the focus groups was dedicated to ascertaining the participants' views on extremism. The reasons for doing so were two-fold; firstly to understand the different opinions on matters relating to extremism within these communities and why people may feel this way, and secondly to provide context to the final section of the focus group which asks them what they feel their local police should be doing about such issues. To do so, the facilitator presented eight predetermined statements relating to extremism and asked them to grade these according to their level agreement. Eight of the ten statements were related to generic extremism for example "*terrorism can sometimes be justified*" whilst the final two related specifically to the type of extremism which that community had been identified as vulnerable too for example *"Kurdish resistance groups are justified to use the violence that they do"*. To ensure that the participants were given enough time to consider the statements fully, they were also included on their packs with a key as to the levels of agreement, i.e. "1 = strongly disagree", "2 = disagree" etc. Using a numerical grading system allowed the facilitator to quantify and compare the responses and add a level of quantitative analysis to a methodology which is otherwise quite qualitative. Each statement was explained individually and the answers were tallied on the flipchart. The results of these would give some indication as to how vulnerable these communities are to extremism and perhaps highlight the driving factors.

This was perhaps the most complicated strategy employed throughout the focus group sessions as it required some considered calculation of the statements in a numerical way. That said, following a quick

explanation of the scoring system, there did not seem to be any issues. For analysis purposes, the statements were drafted in a way which indicated that those who strongly disagreed perhaps had more resilience to radicalisation, whilst those who agreed were perhaps more vulnerable or sympathetic to this rhetoric.

Police role in preventing extremism

The final section of the focus groups involved asking: "*what do you think the police could do to stop people becoming terrorists?*" This was intentionally left as an open question to avoid leading any of the initial responses. After gaining the initial responses and discussing these in some more detail, the facilitator then directed conversation around four more specific points:

- How can the police identify individuals vulnerable to radicalisation?

- Should the police try to support vulnerable individuals or should they monitor them, or both?

- How could the police support individuals who are vulnerable to becoming involved in radicalisation?

- Should there be a specialist police team for this sort of support or should all police officers be involved?

These questions sought to understand the participants' perceptions of the wider police role in preventing violent extremism within the UK before ascertaining whether they thought that NPTs should be involved in Prevent policing. The facilitator felt that it was important to ask the participants what their view on NPT involvement was, as it would offer a community perspective to the most fundamental aim of this research. Although their level of understanding may not be as strong as the police participants and those informing academic literature it is valid nonetheless. With regards to recording the answers to this section, the facilitator decided to simply note responses on the flipchart and informally gage the level of support for each, this was then later compared with the fuller notes from the assistant. It was felt that this informal method of recording would help to maintain momentum at this stage in the session. This section of the

session was very much about exploring suggestions for improvements to Prevent and local policing from the community perspective and as such it was not deemed necessary to grade or tally the responses during the session.

Closing

Finally the focus groups were drawn to a close with the facilitator thanking everybody for their time and contributions. The next stages of the research were explained to the participants and a timeline was given as to when the work would be completed and available. The facilitator provided personal contact details to those who wanted it along with details of support services to ensure that they felt supported and valued as participants for this research.

After each focus group had finished, extra time was factored into the room bookings to ensure that the facilitator could remain in the venue at the end of the session opening up the opportunity for participants to approach and discuss issues more privately. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, focus groups can be beneficial in generating dialogue across groups of interested parties, however the use of 'one-on-one' engagement can also result in more personal disclosures. It was therefore crucial that participants were able to approach the facilitator beyond the structured format of the focus group to allow them to provide input into the research which they may feel less comfortable with in group setting or that had not been addressed during the session.

Upon finishing the sessions, the facilitator immediately started to write down initial thoughts as soon as practicable afterwards to ensure that all early impressions were captured. The form of analysis used for these focus groups can be referred to as reflexive as they are largely dependent on the researchers interpretation of the events being analysed; "*Reflexivity relates to sensitivity to the ways in which the researcher and the research process may shape the data collected, including the role of prior assumptions and experience*" (Birks, et. al. 2014. p.157). Whilst this is not necessarily a disadvantage, it

was important to acknowledge that the notes taken by the facilitator were fundamentally based on their interpretation of the statements made during the session and thus should be viewed as having a degree of subjectivity; "the data described here is inevitably a reinterpretation of the participants' positions, including [the facilitator's] constructions and attributions beyond the participants' own intentions, and they may *not share [the facilitator's] interpretation."* (Smithson, 2000, p.117). To minimise the impact that this form of reflexive analysis had on the findings, the assistant was also required to initial notes following each session, but the two records would be produced in isolation. A fuller write up utilising these notes, participant packs, and flipcharts was completed over the course of the following week. Where any points of disparity were identified in the two records, the facilitator and assistant met to discuss the instance and provide more detail as to their interpretation and either agreed a consensus or noted the difference in interpretation for the purpose of analysis.

Analysis and findings

This section provides an overview of the key results and findings from the four focus groups, the findings are deducted from analysis of the content of discussions within the focus groups and is presented according to the distinct sections of the sessions.

<u>Community cohesion</u>

The primary section of the focus groups concentrated on community cohesion; the groups were asked five key questions to gage their perspective of their local area and community relations within. The participants were asked to provide 'yes' or 'no' answers to each question via a green and red flag. The five questions and results are shown below. It is important to note, that due to the small sample sizes, whilst comparisons could be made across the case studies, these could not be considered statistically significant.

The below table shows the percentage of participants who answered positively to each question ('yes' to questions one, two and five, and 'no' to questions three and four), the results have been presented in this way to allow for an easier scoring reflection across the questions and case studies with the inference being the higher the percentage shown, the stronger the positive response. The percentages provided are taken from either a total of seven or eight depending on the group.

Table 8. Focus group results across case studies - community cohesion.

Questions	CS One Islamic	CS Two Kurdish	CS Three Right Wing	CS Four None	Total
1. Are you happy in the area where you live? *(Yes)*	43%	71%	71%	88%	69%
2. Do you feel that your community is well integrated in your area? *(Yes)*	57%	43%	57%	75%	59%
3. Are there any community tensions in the area? *(No)*	29%	57%	29%	63%	45%
4. Do you think that there are any elements of the community which do not integrate well or are more isolated? *(No)*	43%	57%	29%	100%	59%
5. Are you part of any community groups or associations? *(Yes)*	14%	29%	0%	13%	14%
Average	*37%*	*51%*	*37%*	*58%*	*46%*
Sample	*n.7*	*n.7*	*n.7*	*n.8*	*n.29*

From this, some key themes emerged in relation to each question;

Q1 Are you happy in the area where you live?

Fewer participants in case study one (Islamist extremism) felt happy in the area that they lived (43% compared to an average of 69% across all focus groups). Case study two and three had the same levels of satisfaction, whilst those in case study four (no specific vulnerability to extremism) ranked the happiest with 88% (7 out of 8 participants).

When asked why they answered in the way that they did, those who said that they did feel safe, generally said it was because "*it was a safe place to live*" (participant 1B) and "*had a good community feel*" (participant 3A). This was a common theme across all of the focus groups. Of those who said that they were not happy in the area that they lived the reasons included "*lack of community feel*" (participant 3F)

to "*people do not care about each other*" (participant 2F). Interestingly, a common theme across case studies one and two related to participant's comparing their current communities to communities where they previously lived in their countries of origin; "*I was happier in my homeland*" (participant 1E) and "*I had a better lifestyle in Turkey, I was richer there so I had more friends*" (participant 2F). Although this comment from participant 2F was said with humour it seemed to have a serious undertone and was echoed by others in the group who later said that they feel like;

"*2nd class citizens in the UK, because they are poor and refugees*" (participant 2A).

This same sentiment was not echoed in any of the other focus groups (perhaps because the majority of participants from case studies three and four were UK born, however interestingly in case study three (vulnerability to right wing extremism), some participants did also state that they felt like "*2nd class citizens in their area because white people are the minority*" (participant 3G).

Q2 Do you feel that your community is well integrated in your area?

When asking this question, the facilitator intentionally did not define the term '*your community*' as community can mean different things to different people and it was felt important to allow a level of subjectivity when trying to gage the participant's perspective. Across the four case studies, 59% of participants (17 out of 29) answered yes to this question. Interestingly it was case study two (Vulnerable to Kurdish extremism) which scored the lowest on this question (43% or 3 out of 7), again case study four (no specific vulnerability to extremism) ranked the highest (75%).

Opinions around this question were fairly mixed; the conversations following the vote suggested that even though many of the participants did not feel that their community integrated well with other communities (community here referred to ethnic/cultural groups), they did feel that they had a good internal community feel; "*I have a close network of friends but they are all people from my background, they are all Kurdish*

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too" (participant 2C). Similarly this was echoed in case studies one and three; "*The Muslim community here is strong, but it is quite insular*" (participant 1A) and;

> "*There is the white community at the top of the hill, and the Asian community at*
>
> *the bottom, but nothing in between, they are totally separate*" (participant 3G).

It is important to note that when asked for examples of what the participants felt was good integration across communities, only two examples across all four focus groups could be provided; "*there are a lot of council projects now that work with youths across communities*" (participant 1D) and "*when something bad happens like the little girl who went missing, everybody works together regardless of race*" (participant 3B)*.*

Q3 Are there any community tensions in the area?

The scoring for this question was varied across the case studies. Case studies one and three (Islamic and right wing) both scored lowest with 29% (2 out of 7) of participants stating that there were community tensions in the area. Case study four (no specific vulnerability to extremism) ranked the highest with 67% of participants saying that there were not any community tensions.

Of those that answered 'yes' the majority of comments followed on from previous conversations relating to people from different cultural groups or backgrounds not getting on together, participants from case studies one, two and three provided plenty of examples of tensions relating to ethnic differences in their areas. Participants from case study two (vulnerability to Kurdish extremism) talked more of tensions *within* the Kurdish community as oppose to tensions between different groups; participant 2B explained that within the Kurdish community there are political tensions between those who are more active and "*wish to bring the politics from home to Leeds and those who no longer want to be involved in political activism*" this was not apparent in other sessions. Interestingly in case study four, none of the discussions were in

relation to cultural or racial tensions, instead the conversation focused more on tensions between young and old, and people of different social classes,

> "*There is little positive interaction between the young and old in the area if anything this is where most of the issues stem from*" (participant 4B).

This could be due to the fact that in this case study area there simply was not the level of racial diversity found in the other three areas.

Q4 Do you think that there are any elements of the community which do not integrate well or are more isolated?

Of all of the questions in section one, this showed the biggest differences across the case studies. All of the participants in case study four answered positively to this question ('no') whilst in case study three only 2 out of 7 (39%) did so. That said, when prompted discussions in case study four did again allude to a lack of integration between the young and old and people of different social classes "*there is little positive interaction between the young and old in the area*" (participant 4F) "*affluent streets back on to more deprived streets, but have virtually no interaction*" (participant 4C). The facilitator got the impression that participants in this group considered the term 'community' to mean groups of people from the same race or culture as oppose to other demographics such as age, class, sexual orientation etc. and as a result they did not link what they were saying about young and old or social classes to being a community cohesion issue

> "*There is no cultural diversity and no reason to fall out*" (participant 4C).

Discussions in each of the other three case studies again focused around racial communities and generally followed a theme (albeit to differing extents) that each community *"keeps themselves to themselves"* (participants 1B and 3B).

Q5 Are you part of any community groups or associations?

This question was asked in order to assess the level of active participation within each focus group. Overall, only four participants out of all 29 stated that they were a part of a community group. In case study three (vulnerability to right wing extremism), there were no participants who were part of a community group or association. The facilitator asked whether the participant's felt there was a reason for this, to which one individual stated;

> *"all of the groups are set up for the Asian community because apparently they need*
>
> *it more than we do"* (participant 3B).

This was conveyed with a tone of anger and resentment and prompted others within the groups to support the claim, "*white people aren't seen as a community here*" (participant 3G). The notion that the white working class are often overlooked and thus marginalised with regards to community cohesion is touched on by (Burnett, 2012 and Beider, 2011), and it appeared that the sentiment was shared within this group. It is interesting to note however that none of the participants in this group or indeed case study four (which were both recruited from local rugby teams) considered their rugby team/club to be a community group.

Concluding points

Overall there were some clear similarities and differences in how participants from each case study responded to the questions around community cohesion in their areas. Common themes emerging were that where there are diverse communities, different social groups seem to be quite insular on a day to day basis, but come together in times of need. It would appear that certain areas have higher levels of

community tensions than others, discussions pointed to potential causes for this not necessarily lying in the cultural differences themselves but actually resentment in how different communities are treated by local authorities. It was interesting to see how this conversation developed with participants as the session moved on to police relations.

Police relations

The first half of this section was focused on policing in general whilst the second half concentrated more on Prevent policing. The participants were split into pairs or groups of three and initially asked to provide three positive and three negative statements relating to their local police. Interestingly all groups were able to provide three positive statements but not all were able to provide three negative. This could be because they did not have as much negative points to say, however, it could also suggest that the participants were not as comfortable with being vocal in a negative way about the police for various reasons. Some of the common themes across the positive statements related to reliability of the police as a service, good treatment by officers, and accountability of the police in comparison to other countries or organisations.

Positive statements:

Reliability

With regards to reliability of the police (the most prominent theme), conversations centred around the point that the police will be there when needed, and that they are quick and effective; "*some people complain that the police don't come when your shed is damaged, but when you need them in the moment, in an emergency, they are there very quickly and that is what is important*" (Participant 3A). This sentiment was reiterated across the focus groups with others stating "*the police are quick to respond, and when they arrive they get on with what is needed, whether that is arresting somebody, calming the situation, or looking after a victim*" (Participant 4B). Of the 36 positive statements provided by the focus groups, 16

related to the reliability of the police, which was the most common theme. Two statements (from case studies one and two), elaborated further and compared the police in the UK to police forces in their country of origin;

> *"the police here are a service and you can rely on them, the police at home are a*
>
> *force, they are there for the authorities, they are not there to serve the public"*
>
> (Participant 2C).

It is worth noting, that whilst the reliability of the police was the most common of all the statements made (from a positive perspective), there was also one negative statement made which countered these; "*we can't rely on the police anymore, when you call they don't come and if they do come they just want to tick the box and go to the next job."* (Participant 2A).

Positive treatment

The next most common theme across the positive statements was good treatment by police officers. These responses generally fell into two categories, fair and respectful treatment and professionalism;

> *"the police do treat you with respect and are very fair here"* (Participant 1D),

> "*even when they cannot help you in the way that you want, they are professional and*
>
> *give you a good service* (Participant 4A).

Interestingly each of the focus groups provided statements relating to the positive treatment the same number of times, (three times per group) making it the second most common theme raised. From this lack of variation it could be inferred that the police in West Yorkshire treat people the same regardless of

demographic which is an important driver to public confidence and strong cohesion and therefore resilience against extremism. This issue was discussed further during the second part of this section.

Accountability

The third common theme across the positive statements related to the level of accountability on the police in the UK in comparison to other police forces abroad. This was more prominent in case studies one and two (Islamic and Kurdish) perhaps due to the fact that the majority of these participants were not born in the UK and so naturally compared police here to the police in other countries. "*The police at home are a law unto themselves, they do what they want and nobody stops them, here they know they can't get away with that so they have much much higher standards*" (Participant 2B). The point of accountability was also mentioned in case study four (no specific vulnerability) albeit not in comparison to other areas;

> "*the police are public servants, everything they do is monitored and standards of what we can expect are clear, if they step out of line in any way they will be investigated and potentially sacked, this is good for the trust of the public*" (Participant 4B).

Visible presence

Visible presence was a common theme across case study one and two (Islamic and Kurdish), but was not mentioned at all in case studies three and four (right wing and no specific vulnerability).

> "*You always see the police walking up and down in the area talking to people*" (participant 2A),

> "*The police are always flying around with the blue lights on*" (Participant 1C).

Not only was this not mentioned as a positive in case studies three and four, but the lack of visible presence was also actually cited as a negative statement in both;

"*you never see the police walking the streets anymore, if you're lucky you'll see a car but that's it.*" (Participant 4A),

"*You occasionally see them in the town centre, but they're not proactive, they don't come up our end unless they've been called*" (Participant 3C).

This was an interesting point which when discussed further created some debate; in case study three, there was a discussion around the reasons for a lack of police presence in their local area. Some participants were quite defensive of the police explaining that it was a result of budget cuts "*there aren't enough police anymore, the ones that are left are good, but they can't keep up*", whilst others were more critical of the individuals stating that "*they don't care, we see them on the local news, doing family days and activities in the Asian community centres, but they don't care about us, they don't even try*" (Participant 3C). The further discussions around this point are outline below, but at this stage it is important to note the level of distinction between the focus groups regarding police visibility in their local area.

Negative statements:
Although there were fewer negative statements provided in each session, there were still some common themes which related mainly to a lack of police visibility or engagement and the police prioritising their efforts in the wrong areas or on the wrong crime types.

Lack of police engagement
The lack of police engagement was the most common theme and one which was noted in all four sessions at least once. Analysis of the statements provided showed that it could be further broken down into two

sub-categories; that the police *can't* engage and that the police *won't* engage, these sentiments were each captured in the following statements;

> *"the police are unable to be visible proactive in community because there aren't enough of them"* (Participant 2F);

> *"They're not interested in listening to communities and solving problems, they just want to get each job done then go to the next."* (Participant 3B);

The fact that discussions around a lack of police engagement was essentially split into two key areas; the police *can't* engage and the police *won't* engage is interesting in itself and provides an indication of public confidence in local policing. Although the numbers concerned here mean it is futile to try and draw statistical conclusions it is important to note that case study three (vulnerability to right wing extremism) was the only focus group to have more participants stating that the police won't engage rather than can't. Further conversations suggested that many in the local community had lost confidence and felt that their local police teams paid little notice of the "*white people in their area, and were more bothered about keeping the Asian people happy".* (Participant 3C). One participant did try to defend the local NPT, by stating that;

> "*It's not the police officers fault, they do care, but their bosses at the top are too scared of the media, they pander to the minority communities and try and keep them onside because they're too scared of being criticised in the papers."* (Participant 3A).

However, whilst this may have been an attempt to defend the local police team it still suggests a lack of trust in the police as a whole. There were a few similar statements made other focus groups, particularly

case study one (vulnerability to Islamist extremism), whereby participants felt that many police officers did care and tried to engage, but some were not interested in working with the public; "*you get good and bad, mostly good around here, they do try and get to know people, but some don't care, they just want to lock up the baddies and aren't bothered about the rest of it, that can be worse though because when you don't know where you stand.*" (Participant 1E).

It is important to remember that the majority of participants felt that levels of police engagement were low because the police cannot engage proactively. This was entirely attributed to cuts to policing and the low numbers of police officers left. *"There just simply aren't enough of them"* (Participant 1D), "*with the best will in the world, there aren't enough police officers to catch the criminals let alone doing visible patrols or sitting around chewing the fat with old dears*" (Participant 4D). Whilst participants were unanimous in their thinking that there should be more police officers, there was some disagreement as to whether the police should actually be more visible in communities. Many felt that police visibility was a key driver of public confidence and a great way to get intelligence to act upon, but some felt that they should prioritise other activities over providing a visible presence:

> "*If you know your local cop, you're more likely to speak to him or her, you're more*
> *likely to trust them, you're more likely to share information, and they're more likely*
> *to catch the bad guys, so everyone's a winner*" (Participant 1B).

Countered by;

> "*We don't need to see a police officer to know that they're there, we need them to*
> *be working hard developing intelligence, building cases, and arresting criminals. The*
> *more time they spend walking up and down the high street the less time they're*
> *spending catching paedophiles or burglars"* (Participant 4A).

These discussions were very interesting and not only related to wider academic debate around the benefits of visible policing, but also directly linked to research aims one and three; to investigate the significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy and to assess whether NPTs should and could be utilised more within the delivery of Prevent.

Police prioritisation

The second most common theme of negative statements provided linked to the prioritisation of police resources and attention. Again these statements can be further broken down into two clear categories; firstly how police prioritise according to crime type, secondly how they prioritise according to geographical area. The first set of statements generally alluded to a perception that the police concentrate on the wrong crime types and spend too much time dealing with minor offences; "*They need to stop worrying about speeding and people using mobile phones, and catch the drug dealers and burglars*" (Participant 1D). This sentiment was reiterated across all of the sessions, and in many cases developed into a discussion around how bad driving is actually more life threatening to more people than drug dealing was. On two occasions the facilitator felt that the conversation was starting to veer off topic and so brought it back around to the initial question.

The less common statement made but perhaps the most pertinent to this research related to how the police prioritise their attention in different areas. This again was more in case study three (vulnerability to right wing extremism), but did feature in all case studies aside from case study four (no specific vulnerability).

> "*The police spend too long in the wrong areas; they put all their time into policing the Asian community*" (Participant 3D)

> "*They are always in the Asian parts, they hardly ever bother with the white areas*"
>
> (Participant 1D).

Interestingly these almost identical statements were made by two different participants (one Asian male in case study one and one white male in case study three), but both felt that this was unfair towards their community. Participant 1D felt that his community was being targeted by the police, whilst Participant 3D felt that his community was being neglected. The facilitator probed this issue further and discussions related to the importance of communication between the police and the public so that people can better understand the reasons for the police's actions.

> "*If they tell us, we're patrolling in the area because there has been some burglaries, we'd feel better than if they were just driving around watching us.*"
>
> (Participant 1B).

It would be fair to suggest that the participants across all focus groups felt that there was a gap in communication between the police and the public which has led to mistrust, which in some communities has got to the stage of feeling that the police are targeting certain communities. Given that this is one of the most prominent criticisms of the Prevent Strategy it is interesting that this became apparent during the session when talking about local policing.

Responses to questions

Once discussions around the positive and negative statements provided had concluded, the facilitator asked the group six questions relating to their perception of their local police, again using the yes or no flags to tally responses. The questions and the percentage that answered yes for each question. It is important to note that these sample sizes are small (either a total of seven or eight depending on the

group), so the differences may not be statistically significant however it does still provide a valuable comparison.

Table 9. Focus group results across case study – police relations.

Question	Case Study One Islamic	Case Study Two Kurdish	Case Study Three Right Wing	Case Study Four None	Total % Yes
1. Would you feel comfortable in talking to the police about issues important to you?	71%	86%	86%	100%	86%
2. Do you think the police treat you with respect?	71%	100%	86%	87%	86%
3. Have you had any personal contact with the police?	86%	83%*	43%	50%	62%
4. If so was this positive?	67%	80%	67%	75%	72%
5. Do you think the police in this area treat people the same regardless of their ethnicity or religion?	50%*	71%	71%	87%	69%
6. Do you think that the police take the time to learn about the cultural issues in their area?	57%	57%	86%	75%	69%
Average % Yes	67%	79%	74%	80%	75%
Sample	n.7	n.7	n.7	n.8	n.29

Not a complete sample; at least one participant chose not to answer.

The table shows the percentage of participants in each group who chose to answer 'yes' to the question. It is important to note that for question five the percentage is only reflective of those who previously answered 'yes' to question four. For the purposes of this research a 'yes' should be considered as a positive response to all questions above at it suggests a level of trust, confidence or engagement with the local police depending on the question.

The case study with the highest average percentage of 'yes' responses across all questions was case study four (no specific vulnerability). Whist this may not be surprising, it is interesting as it suggests that local policing is viewed more positively in the community with no additional vulnerability to extremism than those with a potential vulnerability. The average positive response rate across all focus groups was

75%, case study two (Kurdish) scored just above this (79%), whilst case study three (Right wing) was in line with the average (74%), and case study one (Islamic) fell below averaging just 67%. Incidentally this somewhat mirrors the scoring of the tallied questions in the initial part of the focus groups around community cohesion.

The results above also show that although 86% of participants across all case studies felt comfortable in speaking with the police (question one), only 44% of those who had previously had personal contact with the police felt that it was positive. Granted the sample sizes do get particularly small here, but this difference in confidence and satisfaction is reflected across wider research and is an issue which may be impacting on relationships between communities and their local policing teams.

Discussions around the responses to question two were particularly revealing; all of the participants in case study two (Kurdish) felt that the police would treat them with respect, but across the other focus groups the responses were much lower (even in case study four which had generally scored better across most of the questions). The facilitator asked participants to explain their answer and it could be said that the explanations so not give such as positive impression;

> *"British police are more respectful to the Kurds than the Iraqi police, but only because they don't know what a Kurd is."* (Participant 2B).

> *"…the police and military in Turkey and Syria can freely persecute Kurdish people and other minorities, the police in Britain are much better, they do not care about what your race or religion is".* (Participant 2D).

These responses again reflect themes previously identified; firstly that participants in these focus groups who were not born in Britain often compare their local police to those in their homeland as a point of

context, and secondly that even though it may not be directly stated as often by the participants, there is the suggestion that the local police have a lack of understanding around political and cultural issues affecting these communities.

This suggestion is supported by the fact that only 69% of participants across the case studies felt that the police took the time to get to know about cultural issues in their area (question six). The results from case study three appear to have driven this figure up, but again when the reasons for these answers were discussed the answers were more discouraging than first thoughts;

> *"They do get to know about the cultural issues, but they pick and choose which cultures, the British culture is overlooked time and time again and the police pander to the rest"* (Participant 3C).

The fact that the highest positive response rate to this question is perhaps not actually as strong an indicator as the numbers would initially suggest is important. The undertone of resentment amongst participants in this case study (which was apparent in previous sections of the focus group) was crucial to acknowledge; for this reason the facilitator was careful that every significant question/response was followed up with a conversation to ensure that the true sentiment of the groups were being captured. Another interesting viewpoint which was expressed in conversations around this question (in all groups to varying degrees) was that the local police should not actually need to get to know the cultural issues in any great detail;

> *"I don't think the police should be expected to have conversations about religion and politics, (and) that should be left to the community leaders and councillors"* (Participant 1C).

This is an important finding as it plays directly into discussions around 'what the role of NPTs should be within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy'. The suggestion that actually participants "*didn't ever need or want to have any deep discussions with the police about things like that*" (Participant 3F), implies that the local policing teams should not concern themselves too much with the sensitive issues around religion, politics, terrorism and other topics which would be useful to the delivery of Prevent. Whilst there was some difference in opinion across the case studies around the ways in which a police officer should engage and get to know their communities, the overall consensus was that the local police should have a basic understanding of their communities to enable them to respond and act accordingly, but nothing more. The public perspective on this issue provided by these focus groups was invaluable to this area of research and was developed further in the final stage of the focus group.

Another noteworthy point is that only half of the participants who answered question five in case study one (Islamic vulnerability) felt that the police would treat everyone the same regardless of ethnicity or religion. One participant chose not to answer this question which means the total sample for this group was just six, nevertheless the level of positive response was considerably lower than other focus groups. The same trend was seen with the answers to question two in that less participants in case study one felt that the police would treat them with respect. Whilst trend appears to point to a logical assumption that participants in this focus group have less confidence in their local police to treat themselves or others fairly the same pattern is not seen in case study two (Kurdish vulnerability). All of the respondents in this group felt that the police treated them with respect but only 57% (four out of seven) felt that they would treat people the same regardless of ethnicity or religion. This was explored further with the group who explained that;

> "*The police do sometimes look at people differently and maybe stop them in cars more depending on their appearance, but this isn't just to Kurdish people.*" (Participant 2D)

Further discussions around this question suggested that although none of the participants (in any group) openly stated that they felt the police in their local area were racist or would actively treat people differently due to their race or religion, there was an suggestion that sometimes people who appear to be from a black or minority ethnic background are more likely to receive a different or increased level of attention from their local police.

"Sometimes the police do treat people differently based on how they look, this isn't always a bad thing though, sometimes it's that they genuinely want to try harder to talk to minority people. Other times though it's because they think we look shady in our nice cars and they assume it's through drugs or dodgy money." (Participant 1B)

Another participant responded to this claim:

"That's not necessarily because of your skin colour though, it could be because you're 19 and driving a £40,000 car. I'm sure if they saw a white lad the same age, in the same car, in the same rough area, they'd stop him too". (Participant 1F)

These conversations were enlightening as they not only resulted in participants challenging each other's viewpoints but also seem to conclude that personal experience of the local police was not necessarily affected by their race or religion even if there are perceived differences in how the police treat people more widely.

In general, this section of the focus group allowed the facilitator to explore perceptions of the local police in detail. This enabled a level of understanding of the drivers behind these perceptions (both positive and

negative) which would inform the different discussions linked to this research, particularly, what the role of local policing is and should be in delivering Prevent.

<u>Knowledge of Prevent</u>

Before the session moved on to perceptions of extremism, the facilitator thought it was crucial to note the level of knowledge of Prevent in each of the groups. This served two purposes; to assess any similarities/differences in the knowledge level across case studies for context, and also to ensure that the participants understood the concept of Prevent before moving on to the final stages of the focus group.

To assess this, the facilitator simply asked the groups to put their hand up if they had heard of the Prevent Strategy. The facilitator did not openly make a tally of answers but did note down the response rate. A comparison of these numbers across the case studies should be considered under the caveat that not all members would have wanted to answer 'yes' for fear of 'incriminating' themselves, secondly some may have put their hand up even if they didn't know as they didn't want participants to think they didn't know the answer. That said, roughly half of participants across all case studies said that they did know what Prevent was, with the exception of case study four (no specific vulnerability) where there was only two participants who put their hands up equating to a quarter of the overall group.

The second question asked of the groups was if anybody minded explaining to the rest of the group what the Prevent Strategy was. In each of the groups there was at least one willing volunteer and although there were some slightly different interpretations of the strategy across explanations offered they did all generally fit with what would be an accepted definition of the Prevent Strategy.

The discussions around this revealed that although some participants had heard of Prevent and could provide a basic explanation, in general the awareness and knowledge of Prevent was low. Of those that offered to explain Prevent to the rest of the groups three out of four stated that their knowledge was based

on experiences through employment (in schools, a youth group and the NHS), and were not based on personal experience of Prevent as a general member of the public. The facilitator provided an explanation of what Prevent is (taken from the Prevent Strategy), and asked for thoughts around this and whether it now seemed familiar to the groups. Many of the responses were quite revealing in that the participants assumed that something like Prevent did exist but had no personal experience;

> *"It makes sense that in this day and age there would be something like this but I didn't ever really think about it."* (Participant 4F)

> *"Oh actually I have heard about these people, they're police officers who wear plain clothes and mingle in with people to identify the terrorists"* (Participant 3B).

This second statement is interesting as although it is not technically wrong, the participant did go on to state that actually he was basing his knowledge on the TV programme Spooks which depicts MI5 operatives and not police Prevent Engagement Officers, further highlighting a lack of understanding around local Prevent policing.

Overall, although this was only a small element of the focus groups it did reveal some quite damning findings regarding the levels of Prevent awareness in these case studies particularly when it is considered that the local Prevent Officers were in theory working within these communities on a regular basis.

Perceptions of extremism

This section of the focus group was potentially the most contentious as it essentially required the participants to think about their level of agreement to the hypothetical use of violence and terrorism. The facilitator was careful to script the statements in a way which would not result in any of the participants

inadvertently declaring their support for terrorism as a tactic or any terrorist organisations. Nevertheless, there was a clear change in tone as certain participants became less willing to divulge the reasons for their answers, although all participants provided answers to all statements. The below table shows the proportion of respondents who either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements. It is important to note that the options were; 'strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree'. The deeper analysis provides greater detail into the breakdown across all categories including the proportion of 'unsure' responses for context.

Table 10. Focus group results across case studies – perceptions of extremism.

Statement	Case Study One Islamic	Case Study Two Kurdish	Case Study Three Right Wing	Case Study Four None	Total % Agree
1. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom-fighter.	43%	29%	29%	25%	31%
2. Terrorism can sometimes be justified.	71%	57%	43%	50%	55%
3. Violence can sometimes be a good way to further your cause.	86%	86%	71%	75%	79%
4. The media portrays a one-sided perspective of extremism.	71%	43%	43%	50%	52%
5. There is little difference between armies dropping bombs and terrorists dropping bombs.	43%	57%	71%	50%	55%
6. People join extremist organizations for the ideology more than the excitement.	57%	43%	43%	38%	45%
7. Violence against governments is better than violence against civilians.	43%	57%	43%	25%	42%
8. Terrorism is legitimized if there are no other means to further the cause.	71%	14%	29%	38%	38%
Average	*61%*	*48%*	*46%*	*44%*	*50%*
Sample	*n.7*	*n.7*	*n.7*	*n.8*	*n.29*

Whilst this data could be interpreted to identify the groups who may have more vulnerability or sympathy with terrorism or terrorist means by their level of agreement with the statements, it is important to note that this is not the purpose of this research. Instead the data above can give useful insights into the perceptions of extremism across the case studies and thus be useful in guiding discussions on the topics

and provide context for the later open conversation around what the role of policing should be in countering extremism, and importantly why.

On average, case study one (vulnerability to Islamist extremism) had a higher level of agreement with the statements than any other group. This is particularly notable with regards to the statements around how extremism is perceived by the media and the public "*one man's terrorist is another man's freedom-fighter*" and *"the media portrays a one-sided perspective of extremism".* The most prominent theme from this part of the session related to the feeling of unfairness and in some cases resentment in how Islamist extremism is perceived as a bigger threat than any other form of extremism:

> *"Any and all terrorism is bad, a bomb is a bomb and it kills people regardless of who detonates it, but all you ever hear about is how bad Islamist extremism is."* (Participant 1D).

Many of the participants in this groups (and others) agreed with this statement with some adding that this causes further isolation and resentment across the Muslim community who denounce so-called Islamist extremism.

> *"Muslims have no more to do with Al Qaeda, Al Shabab, or Islamic State than any other person in Britain, yet we're expected to apologise on behalf of these people every time there is an attack. If you're Muslim and you don't openly condemn the terrorists people think you support them*." (Participant 1C)

This was added to further:

"I do think there is a one-sided view of terrorism in the media and I do think that people define terrorism according to what the government tells them to. The prime minister says that Muslim terrorists are the big bad guys, so all of a sudden they're the only big bad guys that people care about. Prevent is a perfect example of this".
(Participant 1D).

The sentiment of an unfair focus on Islamist extremism was touched on in the other groups although perhaps not to the same extent and in some cases unintentionally. The facilitator did not mention any specific form of terrorism in any other the focus groups yet in all sessions conversations centred on Islamist extremism. Interestingly the participants in case study two (vulnerability to Kurdish extremism) did not consider proscribed Kurdish groups such as the PKK to be terrorist organisations, and discussions in this group centred almost entirely on extremist organisations such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. In case study three, there was again a heavy focus on Islamist groups but with the occasional comparison to more extreme right wing terrorism and although no specific organisations were named discussions did refer to neo-nazis and far right ideologies. Similarly in case study four (no specific vulnerability), the conversation was almost entirely focus on Islamist extremism until one participant mentioned the troubles in Northern Ireland and made reference to the terrorist groups involved there, but this was towards the end of the discussion which quickly moved back to Islamist extremism.

This focus on Islamist extremism is interesting; there is a wealth of debate around Prevent and counter-terrorism policing having a disproportionate focus on Islamist extremism (as covered in the literature review) but there is less discussion around the imbalance portrayed by the media and thus felt in communities. Those such as Thompson (2012) and Spencer (2012) have more recently sought to draw attention to this issue, and it is of note that the findings from these focus groups appear to support the argument that there is a perception amongst many that terrorism is predominately an Islamic issue.

Discussions within the focus groups went further with participants deliberating whether the focus on Islamic extremism is justified because the threat is bigger so the government, media and public focus on this, or because the government, media and public focus on this we feel that Islamist extremism is the bigger threat. This again was echoed in the focus groups:

> *"It's like the chicken and the egg, are the police worried more about Islamic extremism because we know we need to, or do we know more about Islamic extremism because we police it more?"* (Participant 4E)

<u>The police role in preventing extremism</u>

The fact that the discussions in this part of the sessions already began to include references to the policing response to terrorism and extremism was encouraging and led on nicely to the final section of the focus group which was a discussion structured around an open ended question *"what do you think the role of the police should be in preventing extremism."* The facilitator felt that it was important to not restrict this dialogue by using voting tallies or pre-written statements and instead simply jotted down key points on a flipchart to reassure the participants that their opinions were being considered.

A wealth of suggestions were offered around what role the police should play in preventing extremism with some healthy differences in opinion. Perhaps the most interesting point to make was although there were some clearly opposing viewpoints shared from across the group, these viewpoints could not be aligned by case study with participants from each group offering challenge to their fellow group members. The two key debates which arose were pertinent to the research aims and centred around whether the police should be the lead agency and whether Prevent should be a specialist role. There was however, one suggestion which almost every participant agreed with; that the police should work more closely with young people to improve their engagement not only around radicalisation but other issues too.

Police as the lead agency

The participants across all focus groups offered some very specific suggestions as to the appropriate activities of the police in preventing extremism including carrying out schedule seven stops at ports under counter terrorism legislation and increased engagement in schools. Each of these discussions (without any prompting from the facilitator) developed into a debate around the level of involvement the police should have within preventing extremism. Some believed that the police need to do more with regards to community engagement and intelligence development to achieve this objective, whilst others felt strongly that this was not the responsibility of the police or that it would be more appropriate for other agencies to take the lead, and that the police should only become involved at the Pursue stage.

> *"We've seen for ourselves how the police can't do the level of engagement that they used to do, or the level that they need to do if they are to successfully stop somebody becoming a terrorists. They need to be in communities and part of the community but there is too few of them and they are too busy now."* (Participant 2F).

This was immediately countered by another member of the group who felt that it wasn't the responsibility of the police to prevent somebody from falling into extremism it was down to the community:

> *"The police should be able to get on with catching criminals and keeping people safe from crime. We should be the ones who are identifying somebody who is going down the wrong path, we should be the people to steer them the right way. Every terrorist has a mother and father, friends and a community who failed to do their job, before the police failed theirs."* (Participant 2A)

Similar debates occurred throughout the other sessions with some participants feeling strongly that the police should do more whilst others thought they should do less. One interesting take on the issue was that the police should take responsibility for the lower level Prevent cases whilst other agencies such as the security services should deal with the more serious cases. This was based on the logic that the lower end cases of potential radicalisation or vulnerability could probably be dealt with through effective community policing and so should be. However, another participant expressed concern about this approach suggesting that a vulnerable youth for example, would be more likely to speak to a friend, school teacher or youth worker than a police officer. One differing take on this perspective was put forward in case study one (Islamist extremism), by a participant who felt that there were ethical issues surrounding police involvement in Prevent:

> *"The police shouldn't be involved unless a crime has been committed. There are plenty of other organisations such as schools, colleges and social services who should be trying to stop people being radicalised, but the police shouldn't be involved until somebody has actually done something wrong."* (Participant 1G).

This point links back to the debate noted in the literature review around Prevent operating in the pre-crime space and the ethical and legal issues related to this. Whilst it is a valid concern other participants did feel that prevention of any sort (whether it is preventing burglary or preventing terrorism) is the responsibility of the police in their task to maintain the safety of the public. Nevertheless it is crucial to consider the impact that police involvement can have with any individual who is potentially on the edge of criminality or being radicalised as it could potentially become a trigger towards offending behaviour.

Another ethical issue with police involvement in Prevent was proposed by participant 1C who felt that *"religion and politics are at the root of radicalisation and the police shouldn't be going anywhere near these two topics."*

Prevent as a specialist role

The second key theme of discussions alluded more to the roles within the police when it comes to preventing extremism. This again links directly to the research aims as it offers depth to the debate around whether neighbourhood policing should play more of a part in delivering Prevent or whether it should be left to the 'expert' Prevent teams.

Again there was no clear correlation between participants from certain case studies and their perspective on this issue but the two main arguments across the groups can be illustrated through the statements made in case study four:

> *"Local police officers already need to know almost everything about every crime; they deal with burglaries, speeding, missing children, you name it. I think it's a bit unrealistic to also expect them to know about radicalisation and all the religion and politics that comes with it."* (Participant 4F)

This was countered by participant 4B:

> *"Surely the only way that the police can identify the small number of people who are radicalised is if every police officer is looking"* (Participant 4B)

This not only plays into the debate around what the ideal role of neighbourhood policing teams should be in delivering Prevent but also what the logistical issues around training and enabling a much wider number of police officers and PCSOs to deliver Prevent in addition to their other responsibilities.

Youth engagement

This was the only suggested police activity which was put forward in each group and which gained a common consensus. It generally came towards the end of the discussions when the facilitator asked; *"what <u>could</u> the police do to help Prevent radicalisation?"* Participants generally felt that there was a link between radicalisation and racism, which if addressed early enough, could be avoided.

> *"If people were more tolerant of differences there wouldn't be terrorism…if we*
>
> *could nip it in the bud through working with children then a lot of the problem would*
>
> *be solved"* (Participant 4B).

Many of the participants offered personal experiences of dealing with young people who had *"inherited their parents racist views"* (Participant 3D), resulting in them holding the same views, and potentially becoming vulnerable to radicalisation later on in life. Others relayed experiences of police officers coming into their schools when they were younger and the positive effect that this had on them, suggesting it should continue now. All of the points made were in line with the wider government guidance on improving community cohesion and as outlined in the literature review, there are strong links between this agenda and the Prevent Strategy. Some participants did however note that concentrating solely on children will not necessarily work, which developed into a conversation about how the police should provide work place training and awareness raising initiatives around Prevent, which again fits in closely with the strategy.

Summary

In summary, the planning and preparation which went into the focus groups helped to ensure that they ran smoothly, stayed on plan, and provided meaningful data for this research. The combination of a facilitator and an assistant worked well and provided the opportunity to capture more data in a less intrusive way. The use of existing social groups also suited the topics area well as it offered participants

a level of familiarity that helped to put them at ease and encouraged open conversations. Whilst there were a range of sometimes opposing viewpoints being offered throughout the sessions, all participants acted respectfully of each other and there were no issues whereby the facilitator felt the need to step in and manage the conversation.

Community cohesion

The majority of participants felt happy living in their local area however there were varying degrees of satisfaction with the levels of community cohesion. A number of participants from each group felt that there were fractions of communities (or entire communities) which do not integrate well (some even citing their own), and that this insular approach was not healthy or conducive to good community cohesion. Some participants also felt that the local authorities treated different communities in their local area differently and that this bread feelings of resentment which were not easy to overcome.

Police relations

On the surface the results from these sessions painted a positive picture of police relations across the case studies with many participants being able to name their local police officer or at least having a positive experience of them. Strengths were noted in relation to the reliability of their local police, the level of accountability of the police service in Britain, and positive treatment by police officers. However, it was also apparent that the level of engagement and visible presence provided by the local police was not to the standard that the participants would like. There were also criticisms in relation to how the police prioritised their time and again a feeling of inequality with regards to which communities the police spend most time and effort in. There was however an acknowledgement across all of the case studies that the local police officers and PCSOs are hard-working and want the best for their communities, however, constraints placed on them either by government cuts to policing or by their senior commanders make it almost impossible for them to maintain strong and positive relations within their communities.

Knowledge of Prevent

The level of knowledge, awareness and understanding of Prevent across the case studies was low. This is perhaps a concern for those delivering Prevent in these areas as three out of the four case studies have been specifically identified due to their potential vulnerability to radicalisation and so should have been engaged with. This is however something that could be investigated further as discussions alluded to an indirect knowledge of Prevent in that many participants knew of their local Prevent Engagement Officer, but perhaps didn't know more detail on the Prevent Strategy.

Perceptions of extremism

This part of the focus groups was the most difficult to facilitate, as the sensitive nature of the topic hindered the willingness of some participants to talk openly. Nevertheless, there was a wealth of information provided particularly around the perceptions of extremism within the media and public. There was again a sentiment of inequality around the portrayal of extremism as an Islamic issue and some interesting discussions around who determines which organisations are terrorists and which are freedom fighters. It was clear from these conversations that the perception of extremism and the factors which influence this also play a direct role in how terrorism is police and consequently how vulnerable communities view the police.

Police role in preventing extremism

This was the most divisive part of the sessions in that all of the case studies appeared to break off into the same debates around the level of involvement that the police should have and the level of expertise that NPTs should be expected to have. In short, the groups did not reach any agreements about the ideal role that police should play in preventing extremism which is enlightening in itself, and supports the argument that community policing (and Prevent policing) should be tailored to suit the needs of the individual communities. The discussions did however allude to practical and ethical issues related to police involvement in Prevent which again mirror much of the academic debate as summarised in the

literature review. The only point of agreement across the groups, was that assuming the police did play an active role in the delivery of Prevent, they should focus their efforts on working with vulnerable young people to steer them away from negative influences early on. Interestingly, the specific suggestions made by the group for future police activity such as awareness raising, training and workshops are all things that the current Prevent Strategy lists as examples of good Prevent work.

Consensus between case study groups

Whilst there were clear themes across the focus group sessions it is important to note differences (and similarities) across the case study groups. Many of the differences in opinions related to the topic of cohesion in their local areas and how well different communities integrated with each other. The results from case study four (no specific vulnerability) were generally more positive than the other three case study groups (which incidentally were all chosen because they were potentially vulnerable to extremism). The only consensus noted across all groups in relation to cohesion was that where there was a feeling of low cohesion, it was generally agreed that this was due to inequalities in how different groups were treated by the authorities, which in turn created resentment.

There were also differences in relation to how the different case studies responded to the questions around police relations. Less participants from case study one (vulnerability to Islamist extremism) felt that the police in their local area treated people the same regardless of their religion or ethnicity than in any other case study group. Whilst this sentiment was echoed in some of the other case study discussions it was clearly more prominent in case study one.

Perhaps the clearest difference across the case studies related to what the role of the police should be in delivering the Prevent Strategy. Whilst there was diversity in opinions within each case study group, the general consensus across case studies two and four (vulnerability to Kurdish extremism and no specific vulnerability), was that the police should be more involved in the delivery of Prevent, whilst there

was overall agreement in case studies one and three (Islamist extremism and right wing extremism), that the police should not be involved and it should be the responsibility of other agencies. Incidentally this ties in with the level of positivity around police relations across the four case studies.

There were also some notable similarities across case study groups; participants from all groups agreed that there was a lack of visible presence from their local police and that they should prioritise their limited resources differently. Whilst the reasons behind these assertions varied, the lack of engagement remained an overall consensus.

The low knowledge of Prevent was also clear across all case study groups with very little divergence. Interestingly there was no clear difference in how participants from case study four (no specific vulnerability) answered this question in comparison to the other 'vulnerable' case studies.

One final clear consensus across the case study groups related to the need for increased youth engagement from the police for the purposes of preventing violent extremism. Whilst the case study groups differed on the level of involvement the police should have within Prevent, every group did conclude that increased police engagement with young people would be beneficial for general crime reduction, good cohesion, and preventing radicalisation, even if this is not done under the banner of 'Prevent'.

Chapter five

Participant activity reports

Participant diaries or activity reports are often used as part of a mixed methodological approach to provide an insight into the perceptions and activities of individuals which can be used to better understand the findings of supporting research methods such as interviews or observations. "*Diaries and interviews are well-established methods for collecting data in the field of health and social research*" (Jacelon & Imperio, 2005, p.994)*.* Participants are required to complete a diary entry or activity report at set times (determined by the researcher), providing detail of their movements, behaviours and reflections in relation to a set topic. These records are then analysed thematically against the research aims to compare and contrast responses from different participants and over a period of time.

The use of diaries as part of a research plan can be beneficial not only for the researcher but also for the participants. They typically require a low level of resource and time to fill in, and can be completed at a time and place which suits the participant - unlike focus groups or interviews which need to be scheduled in advance. Similarly, completing a diary entry can be easier for the participant than taking part in focus groups or interviews as they are not required to remember detail from the past; "*they can provide a rich source of meaningful data and can avoid the difficulties of participants trying to precisely recall events after some time has elapsed.*" (Thomas, 2014, p.25). Depending on the needs of the research they can also be completed over a set period of time, for a week, a month, or even a year. This allows the researcher to analyse the data over time, in a way that would not be possible through interviews unless follow up interviews were scheduled. Whilst there are challenges for the researcher in relation to compliance rates, sanitising and standardising the information provided, other concerns such as interviewer bias or influence from other participants (in focus groups) are not as relevant with this method of data collection.

The aims of this research centre around the current activities of NPTs and how this could potentially fit into the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, for this reason, activity reports of Tier One participants (NPTs and PEOs) were chosen as a suitable tool for data collection. Activity reports as used in this research differ slightly from a standard participant diary in that they are more structured and involve specific questions. Within qualitative research, the use of participant diaries is flexible and can be designed to suit the needs of the research. For some, the use of one open-ended question is reasonable, with very few boundaries placed on the type of information provided in the participant diary. Alternatively, some participant diaries follow a set structure or involve a pre-determined template for the participants to fill in to ensure that particular information is captured. For this research, the purpose of this method was to generate data relating to the activities of NPT and PEO participants during their shifts, with a particular focus on their interactions with communities. Given the broad nature of the work of an NPT team, it was decided that set questions would be useful in keeping the input on topic (focused on community policing work). It was however crucial to note that asking only about set activities would not provide a holistic overview of entire shift, so consideration was needed as to how the report would capture the relevant activity in the context of wider participant activity. These considerations are outlined later in this chapter, with a copy of the template provided to participants, but in summary the activity report required the participants to provide estimations on the time spent on different activities (included community engagement), details of the areas worked in, and any community issues which may have arisen during their shift. These data would then be coded and analysed thematically across job roles, case study areas and over time to provide the deeper level of detail around the activities of participants.

Planning

To ensure that the use of these activity reports would meet the purpose of this research in an ethical manner, consideration was given to a number of factors including the participants involved, the number of activity reports required, the duration of the collection period, and the level of structure included in the templates.

<u>Participant selection</u>

The main aims of this research were to better understand the significance of community engagement, and the current role of neighbourhood policing within the Prevent Strategy - to inform discussions around whether NPTs should or could be utilised more. For this reason, more detail into the daily duties and activities of NPT and Prevent staff was sought, and it was decided that the Tier One participants would be the most suitable subjects for the activity reports. It was also decided that *all* of the Tier One participants should be required to provide activity reports as this would not only provide a wealth of data across roles in the different case studies, but would also provide a level of resilience, should any of the participants drop out during the fieldwork period. Whilst it was deemed that enough data could be generated by choosing a sample from the Tier One participants, it was not considered to be excessive to ask all participants given that for those who were not interviewed, this would provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the research in a meaningful way. The researcher was aware that this decision would result in 19 participants filling out activity reports throughout the fieldwork period, generating a significant amount of data which would need to be managed in accordance with legal and ethical guidelines. The time required to administrate this was factored into the wider research plan in a way that did not detract from the capacity of the researcher to fulfil the other responsibilities. These considerations did impact on the decisions around frequency of the activity reports and the duration of the fieldwork period.

<u>Frequency and duration</u>

It was important that the content of the activity reports covered all types of shift worked by the participants, as the nature of policing means that often very different issues will arise on different shifts. The tasks assigned to a PC, PCSO or PEO during mid-week day shifts (referred to as earlies) are likely to vary considerably to the demands placed on them on a weekend late shift (evenings). Although PEOs don't typically work the same shift patterns as the NPT participants, the duties they carry out will still vary

across the days, weeks and season. It was important that the activity reports captured the full range of duties covered by the participants.

To determine the most suitable method of completion for the activity reports, prior consultation with the participants was carried out. The participants were given sight of the proposed template and asked if they would prefer to fill out the form at the end of each shift, or at the end of each set of shifts (seven consecutive days). The preferable choice for the research was for participants to complete one activity report at the end of each shift to minimise the risk of details being forgotten. However, it was also acknowledged that the more efficient process could be to fill out one activity report at the end of each set of shifts, covering all of the shifts within it. This was likely to help with compliance rates, as the nature of policing means that often staff do not finish their shift on time, or have very little time at the end of each shift to do any additional administrative work. Participants felt that they would find it easier to set aside more time at the end of each set of shifts than at the end of each shift. Furthermore, all PCs, PCSOs and PEOs are required by law to keep a record of their activity in their Pocket Note Books for reference and evidential submissions. This would also help them to recall information about their activities on the previous week, reducing concerns about accuracy and missing information. This approach also helped to monitor the submissions of participants in a more manageable way, than if 19 reports were submitted every shift.

Once it was decided that the participants would fill out one activity report per set of shifts, consideration was given to the duration of this element of the fieldwork. In the same way that the activities of police can vary from day to night, they can also vary according to season. Summer months may see more public events and require proactive engagement, whereas winter months can often see an increased focus on burglaries and crimes committed through the darker evenings. It was therefore deemed crucial that these activity reports were completed over the course of a 12 month period (April 2014 to March 2015) to capture the full range of policing activity. However, requesting the participants to submit an activity report

for every set over the course of a year, was not deemed proportionate or necessary. It was important to remember that the participants would be serving members of the police and so the impact on their work must be kept as minimal as possible, it was also thought that participants were more likely to lose interest if they were expected to fill out the reports for a full year, furthermore this would potentially create more data than could be meaningfully used for the research. For these reasons, it was decided that the participants would be required to complete activity reports every other month. This essentially meant that there would be six months' worth of data, covering the full 12 month period. This would generate enough data, across the appropriate time frame, whilst minimising the impact on the participant and maintaining interest in the research.

Template design

Once the participants had been identified and the duration and frequency of the reports determined, the template could be designed. As mentioned above, consideration was given to the level of structure required for the activity reports. Whilst one open-ended question such as '*what have you done during this set?*' was not deemed to be specific enough, it was also important that the template was not too prescriptive in what it required and so did not limit the participant in the degree of information that they wanted to provide. It was important that the activity reports were not too onerous to complete and presented in a way which did not put off the participants from filling them in. For this reason, the template was designed to be between one and two sides of A4. Once some space had been allocated for recording the administrative details, there remained space for between five and eight questions. This was in keeping with academic guidance on designing a participant diary (Corti, 1993) and was also considered to be suitable for the needs of this research.

Much of the academic guidance around designing questioning styles which were noted in the interviews and focus group chapters were also relevant when drafting the specific questions for the activity report. It was therefore important to consider questioning styles, influence and simplicity, and ensure that they

would encourage responses which were pertinent to the purpose of the research (for fuller discussion please refer to chapters three and four). One element of question design which required a slightly different approach for this methodology related to the level of detail provided. In the focus groups and semi-structured interviews it was important that the questions were open ended and not too prescriptive, to encourage full and detailed responses. The purpose of the activity reports were to provide data pertaining to the day to day duties of the Tier One participants and so did not require the same level of detail or opinion as was sought in the interviews or focus groups. For this reason it was decided that the questions would be relatively more structured but would still require free text answers. Consideration was given to providing multiple choice options but it was decided that this would be too limiting, and could inadvertently result in the participants rushing through the template when busy without giving as much thought to their responses.

The purpose of the activity report was to quickly capture details of participant activities linked to the research aims. For this reason, questions were focused largely on the community engagement activities, other demands which could hinder the participant's ability to carry out community policing duties, and their awareness of any cohesion issues in their community. To capture this information, the participants were required to provide estimates of the amount of time that they had spent conducting a certain task or policing in a certain area. They were then asked to record any issues relating to community cohesion or extremism that had come to light during their shifts. Finally, they were asked about any engagement or intelligence tasking that had been allocated to them and whether there were any other points they felt were pertinent to this research. Once the initial template had been drafted, participants were consulted on and a few minor changes were made. The final template was as follows:

Participant Activity Report	
Participant	
NPT and Team	
Dates of shifts covered	
Date of report	

Which geographical areas have you spent most of your time in during this set? Please provide basic time estimates and reasons i.e. burglary patrols, ASB, community engagement, etc.
Approximately how much of your time have you spent dealing with station duties i.e. paper work, custody, submitting intelligence etc.
Approximately what proportion of your time have you been able to dedicate solely to engagement with the public and/or partners? Please provide details of times, agencies / community contacts and reasons for engagement.
Are you aware of any issues relating to community disharmony or tensions which have arisen during this set? Please provide basic details of the issue and steps taken.
Have any individuals, communities, or groups come to your attention during this set for reasons relating to extremism? Please provide basic details (not including personal information). If so what steps did you take, i.e. intelligence report, referral, arrest, etc.
Have you been tasked with any community engagement or intelligence gathering this set? Please provide detail including who the task came from, what did it entail and whether you managed to achieve it?
Are there any other points which you would like to raise in relation to this research?

The response boxes could be expanded for the participant to fill as much or as little detail as they would

like, however an example activity report was provided beforehand to give an indication as to the ideal

level of information. The participants were all briefed on how to fill in the activity reports, in person, before

the fieldwork began. During this session a hard copy of the template was presented and the participants worked through an example activity report as a group to demonstrate what level of information was required.

Ethical considerations

Beyond the overarching ethical considerations outlined in the methodology section of chapter two, there were some additional considerations specific to the activity reports.

<u>Recording</u>

The main consideration was whether the participants would fill out the activity reports electronically. This was preferable as it meant that they could be easily emailed to the researcher across the secure West Yorkshire Police system and stored accordingly. Although the participants were advised not to include any confidential details, the information within the reports would be considered 'restricted' until sanitised. This was discussed with the participants during the planning stages and the majority were happy to type the information directly on to the template on Microsoft Word. However, some felt it would be more beneficial if they filled out a paper copy by hand. These participants were asked to scan the paper copy on to the computer so that it could then be emailed across the secure network in the same way, before shredding the paper copy. It was important that all activity reports were sent and kept on the secure system not only for data protection purposes, but also for consistency to assist with the monitoring of compliance.

Automated systems were considered such as the use of online survey sites, whereby the participants could each log in to the site and input their activity report. However, it was decided that the process of manually emailing the report to the researcher would maintain a channel of communication throughout the fieldwork period which would encourage further discussion if needed. The security risks associated with using external sites were also considered to be slightly higher, given the sensitivities of the potential

content of the activity reports it was decided that using the secure West Yorkshire Police systems was the most appropriate choice.

Implementation

In some ways the activity reports were more problematic than the other methodologies used, as there was a level of responsibility placed on the participants to ensure that they were regularly completed. This was not the case with the interviews and focus groups as the participants simply had to attend a pre-determined location for a short amount of time, similarly the observations (detailed in chapter six), did not require any additional effort from the participants to their normal shift.

Compliance rates of participant's filling in the activity reports was the biggest challenge. The agreement to let participants fill in the activity reports on a weekly basis (rather than daily) undoubtedly helped with compliance rates and also helped the researcher monitor the submissions and send out prompt reminders for any outstanding reports. Each time an activity report was received, it was saved in the relevant folder and recorded on a register so that any missing reports could be identified and requested with ease. This system worked particularly well and compliance improved with time as the participants got into the habit of filling them in and being chased if they had failed to do so. By the end of the fieldwork period there were only two missing records out of a maximum of 360, providing a compliance rate of 99.5%. The two missing entries were due to a participant leaving the role of PCSO to become a PC. It was expected that over the course of 12 months some participants may need to leave the fieldwork for various reasons and therefore a contingency plan was put in place for this scenario. The initial participant was still happy for their input to be included in the research, and a different PCSO agreed to take their place. The interim period of three weeks for the participant to be identified and inducted into the research resulted in a gap of two activity reports. Incidentally the two participants were of similar demographic, worked the same area, and had a similar amount of experience within that role, so it was not thought that

the impact on the results would be that significant. However, all analysis took this change into account and this set of activity reports was scrutinised closely with the date of change being noted.

Using the West Yorkshire Police email system to submit the activity reports proved to be a good decision. It not only provided a level of security that would not be found on a standard email network but also opened up a channel of communication between the participants and the researcher. This was used on multiple occasions as the participants would often send over their activity report as an attachment but then provide additional information or open up a discussion via the email. Examples of this included their thoughts on a task that they had been given or suggestions as to how they thought their activity or role could have been improved. With permission from the participants, some of this additional detail has been included in the analysis in order to provide context or explore an issue in more detail.

The choice of question style also worked well for the purpose of this research. Asking participants to provide estimates of the amount of time they had spent in a certain area or on a certain task helped the participants complete the reports relatively easily: "*it was actually easier to work out how much time I'd spent than I thought it would. It's not precise but I think it would be pretty accurate if somebody was to time it with a clock".* (Participant PC3). Although a degree of approximation was required for the participants to provide an answer, this was not considered a limitation as the research did not require absolute figures on how much time was being spent in each area, as there were many other factors which would hinder the statistical comparisons of these responses across the case studies and roles in any case. What was needed were estimated time spent (in hours) on different activities, this would allow reasonable analysis of trends over the one year fieldwork period and also (to a lesser but still valid extent) comparisons across the participants in different roles and case studies. The non-participant observations (see chapter six) also provided a level of verification of these responses which confirmed that the estimations of time appeared to be accurate. One minor issue encountered during the implementation of this methodology related to the questioning styles chosen, was that the participants did not record their

time in the same consistent format. For example, some would provide their results in minutes, whilst others would provide it in hours, i.e. 90 minutes, or 1.5 hours. Whilst this was not a significant problem it did mean that additional time was needed to standardise all of the responses prior to analysis.

Results and findings

In total there were 358 activity reports produced as part of this fieldwork. The PCs and PCSOs worked on a three week cycle meaning that for every calendar month, each participant would work three sets of seven shifts. This meant that they would produce three activity reports (one for each set of shifts). Participants were required to fill in reports every other month (six months of the year), which resulted in each NPT participant filling in 18 activity reports through the fieldwork period. There were eight PCs and eight PCSOs taking part in the research across the four case studies and so this equated to 286 activity reports from NPT participants; 144 from PCs and 142 from PCSOs (two were missing as noted above). The PEOs worked to a Monday to Friday shift pattern and so for every active month they would provide four activity reports (one per week), there were three PEOs taking part in this research which meant that there were 72 activity reports received from Prevent participants. The differences in sample sizes across the roles was taken into consideration during the descriptive analysis in calculating proportions. The table below illustrates how the sample of activity reports was broken down.

Table 11. Activity Reports – volume of submissions.

Sample	Calculation	Total activity reports
NPT	8 PCs fill in 3 activity reports each month over 6 months: 8x3x6=144.	144
	8 PCSOs fill in 3 activity reports each month over 6 months: 8x3x6=144.	142*
Prevent	3 PEOs fill in 4 activity reports each month over 6 months: 3x4x6=72	72
Total	144+142+72 = 358	*358*

* *2 activity reports were missing as noted above, bringing the total of PCSO reports to 142.*

It was important to note the smaller sample sizes for the PEOs. However, the volume of activity reports received was still considered substantial enough to draw valid comparisons from. After time had been spent standardising the responses received, it was decided that a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis would be used. The first three questions were more suitable for statistical analysis of the time spent in certain areas or doing certain tasks, whilst the latter three allowed for some quantitative analysis but also provided information that would be suitable for qualitative thematic analysis.

Geographical areas

The first question asked participants to name the geographical areas which they have spent the majority of their time in during the set of shifts, and to provide the reason(s). The geographical areas recorded on the activity reports were sanitized in order to protect the identity of the participants and community members, instead identifying numbers were given. The purpose of this question was not to calculate which area was given the 'most' attention from the police but whether this engagement differed in vulnerable communities. Due to the size differences of the areas covered by each NPT, a straightforward comparison would not have provided a reliable indication as to the areas which were receiving the 'most' attention from the police anyway as the size of the patrol areas varied significantly across the case studies. For example, the NPT area covered by case study one was geographically much larger than that covered by case study three. This meant that case study three participants were afforded more patrol time in each 'community', so a like for like comparison based solely on time would not be possible. Instead the analysis was focused more on determining what proportion of the participants' time was spent in areas considered to have vulnerable communities.

In case study one (vulnerable to Islamic extremism) all of the participants declared that the majority of their time was spent in the same two areas (44% of the estimated time was spent in area 101, whilst 36% was spent in area 102). The same pattern emerged in the analysis of the case study three activity reports (vulnerable to right wing extremism) where 52% of estimated time was spent in area 301 whilst

34% of time was spent in area 302. Perhaps the most notable point to make here is that all of these areas were deemed to be vulnerable to extremism based on the criteria previously outlined in this research, but this was not seen in case study two (vulnerable to Kurdish extremism). Participants in this case study estimated that the majority of their time was spent in area 201, which does have any known additional vulnerability to extremism than the average community in West Yorkshire, the second highest area for time spent (202), did however meet the criteria for vulnerability but only 22% of time was spent here across all case study two participants. Case study four (no specific vulnerability) could not be analysed in this way due to its lack of vulnerable communities. However it should be noted that there was less synergy in the responses across the four participants; their time was spent relatively evenly across eight areas within their NPT, in each of the other case studies no more than five areas were named throughout all of the activity reports.

Two interesting points can be deduced from this; firstly that participants from case studies which police vulnerable communities appear to focus their attention on fewer areas, whilst participants from case study four (which does not cover a specific vulnerable community) appears to spread their focus much more widely across their area. Secondly, case studies one and three appear to align their resources towards policing the communities which are vulnerable to extremism, whilst case study three does not. In isolation, these data cannot explain the reasons for these points, further exploration is needed and it is important to understand the many factors which can lead to an area receiving a high police presence. Aside from this analysis, the key reasons for increased police attention on a specific area are; a higher police to population ratio, higher levels of demand such as crime, and higher levels of vulnerability (not just to extremism). When the areas provided in the activity reports were compared against these three criteria (using open source data on police staff numbers, census data, and recorded crime levels), it became clear that the focus of case study one and three on the communities vulnerable to extremism could simply be due to coincidence in that these were also the areas with a higher police to population ratio and higher crime levels. Similarly area 201 which received the most attention from participants in

case study two (but was not considered vulnerable) did have the highest crime rates than anywhere else in their area. This suggests that although participants from these case studies were generally spending a higher proportion of their time policing the vulnerable areas than the non-vulnerable areas, this may not be due to intentional tasking in relation to the vulnerability and is related to general policing demands. The fact that participants in case study four (no specific vulnerability) named more areas in their activity reports than those in the other case studies could also be due to the same reasons. This case study area is of a similar size with regards to population to case study two, but is spread over a wider geographical area, the police to population ratio is also much lower in case study four meaning that the participants simply cannot focus their efforts more on certain areas and must spread themselves more widely. The recorded crime levels also contribute to this in that there are not clear crime hotspots in this case study to the same extent than is seen across the other three areas. This again compounds the conclusion that although efforts seem to be focused on communities of vulnerability, the vulnerability itself is not the driving factor for this.

Another element of the analysis was to compare the time spent in each area across the roles of the participants in each case study area. This analysis could only be carried out across case studies one, two and three, as case study four did not have a PEO working within it, however two key findings emerged.

Firstly, PEOs spend a higher proportion of their time in areas considered to be vulnerable than PCs and PCSOs. Although this would be a logical assumption based on the fact that PEOs are specialist roles for the purpose of engagement within communities vulnerable to extremism whereas PCs and PCSOs have much more general role profiles and are required to respond to a varied range of police duties across all communities. Crucially, the analysis of these data supported the assumption, in that the average time that PEOs spent in the areas of vulnerability was considerably higher than their NPT

counter parts; with an average of 150 minutes per shift for PEOs compared to an average of 80 minutes for PCs and PCSOs.

Secondly, there was a higher level of consistency in responses from PEOs pointing to a more structured approach to 'patrol based engagement'. Although all participants named the same areas in their case studies when asked where they spent the majority of their time, this was much more constant across the PEO participants than the PCs and PCSOs. This was calculated by taking the most common geographical area noted for each role in each case study and identifying the range (in minutes) that they spent there per shift across the year. Throughout the 12 month fieldwork period, the PEOs responses for the area that they spent the most time in only fluctuated by 25 minutes per shift, from an average range of between 140 and 165 minutes. Alternatively the average time that PCs and PCSOs spent in their most commonly patrolled area ranged from 35 to 150 minutes, a fluctuation of 115 minutes. Further information provided by the participants suggested that this was largely due to the fact that PEOs are able to plan their engagement and patrols out more proactively than NPT participants who are often required to respond to incidents and calls as they occur. Interestingly these averages were analysed in a time series across the 12 month period and showed that there was no clear pattern or increasing/decreasing trend of statistical significance. Importantly, this was apparent for the amount of time spent in the different geographical areas, but not for the amount of time spent engaging with communities. Analysis of question three which asked how much time was dedicated solely to engagement (discussed later), showed that there was a decreasing trend over the 12 month period across all roles. This apparent contradiction in results showed that although the amount of time participants spent in the specific geographical areas of need did not seem to reduce, the amount spent solely on engagement within these areas did. This suggested that the NPT participants were less able to be proactive as the year went on, due to the increasing need to respond to calls and general policing demands, whilst the change to PEOs activity was less visible.

The second and third question in the activity reports alluded to differences according to role and case study area, but also showed clear changes over time. Question two asked participants to approximate how much of their time had been spent dealing with station duties i.e. paper work, custody, submitting intelligence etc. For clarity, this was simplified through the examples and briefing sessions, by firstly asking how much time had been spent in the police station per shift, followed by estimates as to what this time was spent doing. A basic comparison across roles showed that PCs spent on average more time in the police station than their PCSO and PEO counter parts; PCs averaged 150 minutes per shift in the police station, whilst PEOs averaged 110 minutes, and PCSOs averaged 95 minutes. The vast majority of PCs' 'station time' was spent recording crimes onto the police systems. It was suggested by multiple participants that this process was too time consuming and detracted them from being out in the community: "*We spend far too much time sat at a computer putting crimes on, obviously this is important but it's not what the public want to see us spending our time doing*" (Participant 1B). Whilst West Yorkshire Police has made changes to how crimes are recorded since this fieldwork to make the process more efficient (as discussed later), it was clearly a factor in why PCs spent less time out in communities than colleagues in other roles. Whilst PEOs and PCSOs would be required to record crimes in the same way as PCs, the nature of their roles meant that this was a less frequent occurrence. Of the time that PEOs and PCSOs in the station, the majority of this time was spent submitting intelligence reports and searching the police systems for information. The similarity in daily activities of these two roles was clear from the analysis of the activity reports, thematic analysis also suggested that PCSOs and PEOs carried out more proactive functions than PCs. Whilst both were tasked to complete various duties throughout their shifts, these often related to problem solving, engagement and intelligence building, whilst the activities carried out by the PCs were focused much more on reacting to calls for service, or following up on enquiries from previous shifts. The differing tasking processes between the NPT and Prevent roles clearly has an impact on the level and style of engagement that different participants are able to carry out within communities, suggesting that if NPTs were to become more involved in the delivery of

Prevent, fundamental changes would need to be made to the way in which the two roles are utilised by West Yorkshire Police.

Interestingly, the participants in case studies one and two (regardless of role) spent a higher proportion of their time within the police station than participants in case studies three and four. This difference in time was significant for the PCSOs, but not for the PEOs or PCs. There are numerous potential reasons for this difference across areas; the type of crime and community safety issues in each case study, the ratio of police staff to members of the public, the tasking priorities of the supervising staff all could be considered factors. However, further investigation alluded to a much more straightforward reason; the location of the police station. In case study one and two the police station was located quite centrally to the entire 'beat area', whilst in three and four it was further away from the main patrol areas. This essentially meant that it was more convenient for participants from case study one and two to travel back to the police station from their patrol areas, and as a result the time that they spent there increased.

Another factor which could have contributed in a similar way was that these two case studies also had a higher vehicle to staff ratio meaning that they could travel back to the station quicker and easier than their colleagues in other areas who would have had to walk or arrange lifts. Of course, this ease of transport also meant that the participants in case studies one and two could have also travelled *out* to their beat area easier thus spending less time in the police station. However, further exploration (and observations) showed that in practice, these participants would make numerous shorter trips to the police station throughout their shifts, whereas their colleagues in case studies three and four would spend a longer period of time in the station at the start and end of their shifts, and would try and avoid returning where possible. The impact of this on the time spent engaging with communities across the case studies was assessed through question three.

Question three asked participants to estimate the amount of time that had been dedicated solely to engagement, (and asked for basic details to be provided). The results from this question affirm what was found above in that PCSOs and PEOs on average spent more time carrying out engagement activities than PCs. On average PEOs claimed to spend 205 minutes per shift dedicated solely to engaging with the public or partners, whilst PCSOs spent around 140, and PCs averaged just 35 minutes per shift. The difference across the roles is quite stark and provided the most varied time ranges from the analysis of all of the questions. It is important to note though, that although the PCs declared that they only spent around 35 minutes per shift dedicated solely to engagement, the time that they spent in contact with members of the public and partners was higher. It was important that the time spent in contact with the public for general policing reasons, i.e. enquiries, arrests, crime prevention patrols, was differentiated from the time spent intentionally engaging with communities but can have a positive impact on community cohesion nonetheless.

As previously noted, case studies one and two had more centrally located police stations which contributed to the participants from these areas spending more time in the police station. It was interesting to note that participants in these areas also spent less time engaging with the public on average. Although this difference was not deemed significant it is still an important finding. It would appear that the more frequent trips back and forth between the police station left them with shorter blocks of time to dedicate to other tasks such as engagement. This was perhaps made unintentionally evident by the way that these participants provided their estimates; participants from case studies one and two, clearly recorded their time entries on the activity reports in multiple sections, whilst those in case studies three and four generally made only one or two entries for the whole shift, as demonstrated below:

Extract answer from participant 2D (PCSO):

Approximately what proportion of your time have you been able to dedicate solely to engagement with the public and/or partners? Please provide details of times, agencies / community contacts and reasons for engagement.
15 minutes with takeaway owner in *location* regarding previous ASB and hate crimes.
10 minutes at sheltered housing.
40 minutes at *named* primary school.
30 in market hall

Extract answer from participant 4C (PCSO):

Approximately what proportion of your time have you been able to dedicate solely to engagement with the public and/or partners? Please provide details of times, agencies / community contacts and reasons for engagement.
90 minutes at *named* high school – spent time in assembly, then patrolled outside talking to parents/students.
45 minutes at *named* youth boxing club.

This could of course be due to the styles of writing across individuals or the briefing provided to the participants beforehand. However, the examples given in the briefing and throughout the fieldwork were consistent for all participants, and discussions in the initial briefing were very similar, suggesting that this could be more than just coincidence. Although this cannot be confirmed, it adds weight to the suggestion that the location of the police station impacted on the styles of engagement across these case study areas. It would appear that participants in case studies one and two engaged more widely but for shorter periods of time than those in case studies three and four.

Another pertinent finding from the analysis of this question was that in all roles across all case study areas, the average time spent engaging with the public or partners decreased over time. The fieldwork spanned a 12 month period from April 2014 to March 2015 with participants providing activity reports every other month. The first month of activity reports was May 2014 (April was left free for interviews to take place), and the last month of activity reports was March 2015 when these are compared the

difference is notable. The average time spent engaging across all roles for all case studies in May 2014 was 115 minutes per shift, in March 2015 this was just 70 minutes, averaging a daily reduction of 45 minutes of engagement per participant, with the largest reductions being seen in the NPT roles. To ensure that this change was not simply due to an anomaly on either of the two months in question or seasonal changes, the average time spent engaging each month throughout the year was calculated and broken down into a time series, the total from the first six months was then compared with the last six month, the deviation was then calculated. The results from this further analysis confirmed a decreasing trend over the 12 month fieldwork period with regards to the time that participants spent engaging with the public or partners. Although the data provided through the activity reports cannot provide the reasons for this trend, this finding does support the claims of the participants who were interviewed, all of whom alluded to increasing pressures being placed on them which is limiting the time available for proactive engagement. To further support this, there was a notable increase in the number of statements made by participants in the activity reports regarding their lack of time spent on engagement as the year went on;

> "*Not enough time, only about 20 minutes each day at best.*" (Participant PC1)

> "*…This totals about an hour a day, I'm supposed to be a community support officer, this is nothing compared to when I started in the job*" (Participant PCSO3).

Although the research did not initially set out to discuss the impacts of changing policing pressures on its ability to engage with communities it is a theme which has occurred through every element of fieldwork and one that has an impact on two of the three of the research aims. Research question two asks what the current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy is, and question three seeks to understand whether NPTs should or could be utilised more within the delivery of Prevent. It is clear that the function of NPTs within community engagement alone, let alone Prevent based engagement,

changed markedly even during the fieldwork period, to the point that it would be more challenging for West Yorkshire Police to utilise NPTs more within the delivery of Prevent if it decided to do so.

<u>Cohesion and extremism</u>

The fourth and fifth question of the activity reports asked participants to describe any incidents relating to community disharmony or extremism that have occurred during their shifts. It was important that these questions captured more than just incidents or events that the participant was directly involved in, and included any information that they had become aware of. This would give a broader understanding of what their role was in such scenarios in comparison to their colleagues, even if this role was minor.

Question four focused on community disharmony and tensions and asks the participant to not only describe the issue, but what steps were taken to resolve it. There were two clear differences in the responses between PEOs and NPT staff to this question. Firstly, that the PEO responses were much more detailed than those provided by PCs and PCSOs in that they not only included more examples of community disharmony but also provided more context and detail of the incident suggesting a higher level of understanding of the issue at hand. The three extracts below are fairly typical of the wider responses and illustrate this disparity with the extract from the PC participant consisting of basic details and totalling just 50 words compared to the PEO's much fuller account of around 400 words and much greater context.

Participant PC1A

Are you aware of any issues relating to community disharmony or tensions which have arisen during this set? Please provide basic details of the issue and steps taken.
Not really, there's been some falling out amongst the Bangladeshi community at ****_location_**** and I know that **named PCSO** was dealing with it. I couldn't tell you what the problem was without asking but I think they're having a PACT meeting *(Police And Communities Together)* with the Sergeant next week.

Participant PCSO2C

<table>
<tr><td>*Are you aware of any issues relating to community disharmony or tensions which have arisen during this set? Please provide basic details of the issue and steps taken.*</td></tr>
<tr><td>We're getting quite a lot of problems on **named street** because the council keep housing people with drink and drug problems in the flats there but it's right opposite some sheltered housing with elderly residents and vulnerable people. Last week a vulnerable guy (I think he has mental health problems) from the sheltered housing went over and put a brick through one of the flat windows because they were being too loud. Council are aware of it but haven't been able to do anything yet, we can keep trying to mediate but until people get moved it isn't going to fix it.</td></tr>
</table>

PEO 3

<table>
<tr><td>*Are you aware of any issues relating to community disharmony or tensions which have arisen during this set? Please provide basic details of the issue and steps taken.*</td></tr>
<tr><td>On Monday I visited **named Mosque,** at the weekend, somebody had drawn anti-Islamic graffiti on two Mosques in **location (not in case study area)** and they were worried about the same happening here. Some of the younger men were riled up about it and the elders had been trying to stop them from retaliating. Things are quite tense at the moment, I reassured them that I would get an update from the officers dealing with **other Mosque** to see if they've made any progress. We talked a bit about crime prevention but we were more concentrating on trying to build bridges between the youths in different communities.

Wednesday, I attended the high school. The schools liaison officer asked me to go up because they've had some fights between white and Asian students recently. I spoke with the Deputy Head for a while to get an idea of the problem. It seems more like boys being boys just wanting an excuse to fight more than anything, but they're using race as a way of picking sides and it's clearly escalating. Deputy said the school wanted to come down hard on the kids involved, (two had already been expelled), but this could be making it worse as the two expelled were both white. We discussed some other options and I offered to either talk to the classes myself or we could get an IP (*Intervention Provider)* to come in. We decided that the Deputy would keep expelling any student who was violent as a bit of a zero tolerance policy, but that they would organise a football tournament for the kids where the teams had to be mixed race. We did this in a school in **other area** once and it worked really well.

There's also worries amongst some of the Asian population that the EDL are coming to **town centre** to do a march. Some people are scared but most just don't want their kids getting involved and going down to fight. I made some enquiries and the march isn't confirmed yet, but we discussed options for diverting youths away</td></tr>
</table>

from the town on that day to keep them out of trouble. We did this last year and the Mosque took a big group of kids to a cricket match on the same day which took them out of the equation.

These are just three extracts from the activity reports but give an indication as to the type of responses being received. To demonstrate this further, the number of issues raised in each response was counted and averaged out across the participants in each role. On average PCs raised 0.7 issues per activity report (this covers 7 days), PCSOs averaged 2.2 per activity report, and PEOs averaged 3.6 issues per five day shift set. Out of the 144 activity reports completed by PCs, 82 were either blank for this question or contained a 'null' answer such as the below examples, whilst only 22 of the PCSO reports were blank and none of the PEOs were.

Examples of 'null' answers:

"Nothing that I know of, but sure there are." (Participant PC1B)

"Not aware of any specific incidents." (Participant PC4A)

"Most probably but I've hardly been on patrol this week as dealing with workload enquiries." (Participant PC2A).

Table 12. Activity reports results – community cohesions issues.

Participant role	Average number of issues raised per report	Number of blank responses
PC	0.7	82 of 144
PCSO	2.2	22 of 142
PEO	3.6	0 of 72

The number of null answers for PCs were compared across the case studies. There was a higher proportion of null answers for PCs in case study two (vulnerable to Kurdish extremism) than any other, but although it was an outlier, the difference was not quite significant.

The second clear difference noted across these activity reports in relation to role was that the responses from the PEOs had a heavy focus on cohesion issues related to race and religion, whereas the responses given by NPT staff were broader. All of the issues recorded in the activity reports were coded and later analysed, with categories including race related, religious, age related, economic/class, sub-culture, etc. Across all responses, race and religious cohesion were the most common issues, however the proportion of responses from PEOs which fell into this category was significantly higher than in the PCs and PCSO responses; 82% compared to 65% and 69% respectively. This could simply be that PEOs are a specialist role intended to work closely with communities vulnerable to extremism and the case studies in question have a focus on religious or race based extremism, making it likely that they would, in turn, be focused on these community issues. It is however important to note the differences in samples for these responses, there were less activity reports provided by the PEOs (as there were only three PEO participants), however the PEOs raised more issues than the NPT staff which increased the sample size for issues raised in these responses. This essentially allowed for a more equal comparison of sample volumes, but it remains that all the issues raised by the PEOs were made by only three participants. This is important as it could also be a factor in why there was a level of synergy across the PEO responses (with regards to a focus on race and religious cohesion) that was not seen across the NPT responses.

The fifth question of this activity reports is worded in a similar way to question four but asks participants to describe whether any communities, individuals or groups had come to their attention for reasons relating to extremism. Similar trends were seen in the way that this question was answered across the roles as noted above, in that PEOs were clearly more aware of issues relating to extremism than their NPT counter parts. Perhaps more interestingly though, was the difference across the case study areas. Whilst there was no apparent difference in how PEOs across case study areas responded, there appeared to be a higher level of awareness of extremism across NPT staff in case study two than any other area. The answers from PCs and PCSOs to this question were markedly more informed, with

details being provided of a variety of extremism related issues. NPT participants' responses from this case study more closely mirrored the sort of information provided in the PEO's responses. Interestingly, this does support one of the findings from the interviews which was that there are inconsistent integration practices across the case studies between Prevent and NPT staff. Furthermore, when asked (during the interview) how many times PEOs attend NPT briefings, case study two gave the highest frequency, stating that they tried to attend around three a week. This was not as high in other case study areas with the others only attending once or twice a month. This could be one reason for the more informed responses from NPT staff as they will be receiving more regular information from their PEOs in relation to extremist issues in their local area, consequently, the NPT staff were more aware and comfortable in dealing with issues when they arose. It should however be noted that although responses from case study two were better informed with regards to the threats and vulnerability of extremism in their local area, there were only three references to Kurdish extremism out of 72 activity reports completed by NPT participants from this area, and all of these came from the same participant PCSO2C. Given that there was a clear and identifiable vulnerability to Kurdish extremism in that area it is noteworthy that the awareness of this vulnerability across NPT participants was so low, for comparison, the PEO participant responses mentioned Kurdish extremism in their responses nine times (in 24 activity reports) illustrating that the knowledge and awareness of this vulnerability was there, but it was maybe not reaching the NPT participants.

One consistent theme in how the participants responded to this question across the case study areas related to the actions taken. Where participants had said that they had been aware of something relating to extremism, they were asked to briefly outline the steps they took. Some form of action was taken in response to 82% of the issues raised by NPT staff, including making a referral, submitting intelligence reports, asking for advice, personally resolving the issue for example. Regardless of case study area, the most common action taken by NPT participants in relation to extremist related tasks was to submit an intelligence report. This accounted for 65% of the actions taken (averaging 3.4 intelligence reports

being submitted by NPT participants per shift set). This did not differ substantially across case studies with the maximum range of variation being just 4%. Interestingly the second most common action taken was to seek advice from a PEO or the Counter Terrorism Unit, via phone call, in person, or email, however this only accounted for 11% of the total number of actions taken. On occasion, participants offered their rationale for taking said action; although this was ad-hoc and could not be analysed in a statistically significant way, the statements made did point to a higher level of confidence and comfort amongst the NPT participants in submitting an intelligence report via the police systems than making a seeking out an individual to ask for advice. This fits into suggestions made by participants during the interviews around the need for better training for NPT staff to improve understanding and confidence should they be required to take a greater role in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy.

The final point to make in relation to how the participants responded to question five was the clear change at a point in time. The responses to this question were also counted and coded, then plotted on a graph over time. There was a clear increase in the volume of information provided from September 2014 onwards. In the months before this, the overall number of 'incidents' recorded by participants across all four case studies averaged at 18.2 per shift set, September's volume jumped to 31.0, and the following months averaged at 27.5. This was explored further and a range of contributing factors were considered, including: training programmes, change in policy, events in the media, to name a few. It became apparent that the most likely reason for this increase from September onwards was the change in the UK terrorism threat level which increased from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE on August 29th in response to international events, the Syrian war, and the rise of the group then commonly known as IS (Anderson, 2015). Whilst the change in threat level alone was likely to have an impact on participants' awareness and focus on extremism, it is important to acknowledge the response from the wider West Yorkshire Police organisation. West Yorkshire Police increased their internal communications messages in relation to the threat level and what was expected of officers and staff across by way of force-wide emails, intranet adverts and posters across police buildings. This was particularly prominent in the

weeks immediately after the threat level was changed, but has continued since. Incidentally, West Yorkshire Police also made changes to their training programme to include more information on extremism, however, only two of the participants received this additional training during the fieldwork period. There was a clear rise in the volume of information included in their activity reports following this training, however, the samples were too small to draw any statistically sound conclusions.

The sixth and last main question of the activity reports asked participants whether they been tasked with any community engagement or intelligence gathering this set, if so by whom, and what was the task. The main purpose of this question was to understand any differences in the tasking processes between PEOs and NPT staff. PEOs were established to be the integral link between neighbourhood and Prevent policing teams and are described as being Prevent staff which are embedded within NPTs. Preliminary enquiries for this research alluded to potential confusion and conflict in the way that PEOs were tasked. The suggestion was that PEOs had two chains of command, the first stemming from the NECTU and via their CCO (Community Contact Officer), and the second being the Sergeant of the NPT in which they are embedded.

The responses to this question appeared to support this claim. The vast majority (87%) of tasking given to the NPT participants came directly from their Sergeant or local policing tasking (which has overall sight of NPT and patrol tasking in each district), whereas the tasking given to the PEOs came from multiple sources including NPT lines and the NECTU. Perhaps owing to their differing roles, only a very small proportion of the engagement or intelligence tasking given to NPT participants appeared to be related to extremism (although it was much harder to differentiate this with community engagement tasking than intelligence tasking). Alternatively, the majority of the PEO tasking related to identifying or engaging with community members who could be vulnerable to extremism. This in itself is not particularly noteworthy but when the tasking of the PEOs is looked at in more detail, there are some interesting findings. Generally speaking the PEOs would be tasked with developing intelligence on a particular

subject of interest to NECTU via their CCO, or engaging with a community group or individual for the purposes of building relations and thus resilience. On average the PEOs recorded six such tasks per activity report, and throughout the 12 months fieldwork period 58% of the tasks given were from 'Prevent lines', 22% were tasked through 'local policing lines'. Coding of the responses also provided three more categories; other department (such as safeguarding, or serious organised crime 3%), origin not disclosed 3%, and duplicate tasking 14%. This last category is perhaps the most relevant to this research; these tasks were ones that had been given to the PEO by both prevent lines, and local policing lines. This duplication of tasking, whilst not particularly problematic for the PEO, does pose questions about the efficiency and integration of the two chains of command. PEOs would often make comments relating to this alluding to a lack of communication between their respective line managers;

"I was tasked to attend **named community group**, by **CCO** to understand tensions there and establish names of organisers. I was tasked the next day by the **NPT Sergeant**, to do the exact same, wording was identical too. They have both clearly been sent the same task and have both just passed straight to me." (Participant PEO1).

14% of the tasks given to PEOs over the course of the 12 month fieldwork were categorised as duplicate tasks. This in itself is not an issue, however, it would suggest that checks need to be put in place to ensure that the management of the wider enquiries that these tasks relate to is clear, if not there is a very real risk that two teams are working in isolation on the same 'operation' but potentially to different ends. This showed that there is a level of commitment within West Yorkshire Police to integrate the work of Prevent teams with Neighbourhood policing, but that in practice the boundaries of shared responsibility may not be clear. If NPTs were to become more involved in the delivery of Prevent, this 'separation' or indeed assimilation of roles would need be clearly addressed, starting with the coordination of tasking and the chain of command.

Another issue which became apparent pertaining to the command lines of the PEOs, was that often some of the tasks given by the NPT lines and Prevent lines contradicted. There were two potential levels of contradiction noted in the thematic analysis of responses, firstly an inadvertent conflict based on demand, secondly a direct contradiction around specific tasks. The first is perhaps less concerning and could be resolved in a similar way to the majority of resourcing and demand issues placed on West Yorkshire Police; it relates to when a PEO has been tasked to carry out and enquiry by the Prevent lines but has then been diverted away by the NPT Sergeant who needs them to respond to a more 'urgent' general policing duty. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain reliable figures on how often this happened from the activity reports, it was a relatively common statement made by the PEO participants:

"I was tasked to attend **named community centre** to give out safety information around cyber-crime, but was diverted away on each occasion to support NPT colleagues as officers have been single crewed this week due to staff sickness." (Participant PEO2).

Preliminary enquiries for this research made with senior members of West Yorkshire Police suggested that this sort of abstraction of PEO staff to NPT functions should not happen, as they are principally there as Prevent embed to improve integration and not as an additional NPT officer. However discussions with the Sergeants and Inspectors of the case study area, indicated that whilst they understood this to be the ideal scenario, it was not a reasonable ambition given the pressures placed on NPTs at present.

"PEOs are specialist officers, with a very specific purpose, but like every other officer with a warrant card, first and foremost they are a police officer. If I need an extra officer to help out at an incident and they're the only one around, I'm going to have to send them."
(Participant 5D, NPT Sergeant)

The reasons for this inadvertent contradiction in tasking appear to be clear and seem to be an organisation wide issue and not just limited to PEOs. This does though play in to earlier findings that pressures placed on West Yorkshire Police to manage demand are hindering their ability to engage with communities.

The second potentially more serious problem is that on multiple occasions PEOs were given two opposing tasks. Whist this was less frequent, statements were made by PEOs regarding this conflict which poses real issues in relation to the chain of command.

> *"Sergeant, asked me to attend **named pub** to find out details about recent disorder, (had been reports of right-wing meets there which have ended in violence following football matches being shown there). I mentioned this in passing to CCO, who told me not to go there as sensitive enquiries are ongoing."* (Participant PEO3).

Whilst this may have simply been resolved by a conversation between the parties involved, perhaps the most concerning element is that the PEO appeared to only find out there was a potential conflict through a casual conversation with the CCO. Had they not have had this discussion, the PEO could have interrupted wider work simply by following orders from their supervisor. This level of conflict did not appear frequently in the activity reports but is important to note nonetheless. It points to a potential lack of communication between two chains of command. It suggests that either changes need to be made to clarify the tasking and supervision of PEOs to just one line, or that there needs to be stronger joint oversight of the existing system of tasking.

Summary

The activity reports provided a vast amount of data relevant to the research aims, this chapter simply picks out the most pertinent findings. The volume and style of the information provided allowed for both

qualitative and quantitative analysis on a scale which was not available from the other methodologies. The findings above provide an overview of the information provided against each of the questions in the activity report. Wider thematic analysis showed that the findings can be categorised into two broad themes; engagement within communities, and the practicalities of delivering Prevent across different roles.

Engagement within communities

Analysis of the 358 activity reports completed showed that whilst engagement levels did not differ significantly across the case study areas, they did across roles. PCs generally had very little time to engage with communities in comparison to PCSOs and PEOs. This was largely due to the broad range of responsibilities placed on PCs which resulted in them spending more time in police stations and carrying out non-public facing duties. PCSOs often commented that they too did not get to spend as much time within communities as they would like or have done in previous years. This points to the earlier finding of this research, that neighbourhood policing is becoming increasingly reactive due to increasing demands being placed on them. Interestingly although levels of engagement did not vary across case study area, the engagement practices did. This was thought to be a consequence of the location of the police station with participants based in centrally located police stations engaging with a wider range of communities but for shorter lengths of time, than participants who were based in non-central police stations. Whilst this research cannot conclusively point to which is the better practice, the police station location clearly has an impact on how communities are engaged with, whether this is for general engagement purposes or for Prevent related engagement.

Delivery of Prevent across roles

A key finding from these activity reports was that NPT participants were not well informed of the cohesion issues or matters relating to extremism in their local areas. Whilst there was some variation in this across the case study areas pointing to the benefits of more regular briefings between PEOs and NPTs, as a

whole the level of awareness appeared to be low. On a similar note, the vast majority of actions taken by NPT participants in relation to Prevent matters was to submit an intelligence report. Whilst this is not necessarily an issue and could in fact be what this wider research concludes is the ideal role for NPT staff within the delivery of Prevent, it does suggest a lack of confidence, capability or capacity amongst NPT participants to deal with such issues personally. The activity reports did show a clear spike in awareness and focus following the increase in UK threat level from international terrorism on August 29th 2014. This is interesting and would be worthy of further exploration to confirm whether the efforts put into improving communications and training by West Yorkshire Police around the threat level change was the driving factor in this increase. The final and perhaps most concerning finding presented in this chapter related to the dual chain of command over PEOs. Analysis of the activity reports showed that whilst the theory behind the embedding of PEOs in NPTs may be strong, in practice it poses numerous problems for the tasking and coordination of the PEO work. At best it results in inefficiencies between two teams but at worst it could lead to conflicting work streams which could have a very real impact on the delivery of Prevent and local policing in these vulnerable communities. This inherent conflict between the differing policing roles would need to be addressed should West Yorkshire Police choose to further integrate Prevent policing within NPTs or increase the involvement that NPTs have within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy.

Chapter six

Observations of participants

The final method of data collection used in this thesis was observation of the Tier One participants (PCs, PCSOs and PEOs) as they conducted their roles. Whilst the semi-structured interviews and activity reports provided a wealth of data regarding the role and experiences of the Tier One participants, it was important to verify this information first hand. Observations are often used in social research to gather information around how subjects behave in a set environment: "…*observation methods attempt to study individuals without interfering with their behaviour if possible. The focus is upon what can be learnt from individuals in their own habitat acting normally"* (Brewer, 2008, p.4)*.* It was decided that observing the Tier One participants on a typical shift would help to supplement the existing findings around the research aims, particularly the exploration of the current role of NPTs within the delivery of Prevent, and the strengths and weaknesses of that delivery. It is important to note that whilst observations were chosen as part of this mixed methodological approach to help verify earlier findings and provide greater depth of understanding, they were not used to gather any additional data sets for quantitative analysis.

Despite not being used to produce primary data, there are multiple benefits of using observation as part of a mixed methodological approach. The focus groups, interviews and activity reports used in this research generated a wealth of information to inform discussions around the three main research aims. However it was felt that observation of the Tier One participants would add further value and insight which could not have been gained without seeing the participants on duty as PCs, PCSOs and PEOs. *"Observation fosters an in depth and rich understanding of a phenomenon, situation and/or setting and the behaviour of the participants in that setting, it is an essential part of gaining an understanding of naturalistic settings and its members' ways of seeing."* (Crabtree & Cohen, 2008, p.2)*.*

The use of observations also compliments other methods; unlike interviews and activity reports, which ask clear questions within boundaries determined by the information that the researcher is seeking, the activity witnessed within the observation session is not controlled by the researcher in the same manner and, therefore, can result in a broader understanding of the issues that the researcher may not have expected: *"…it provides opportunities for viewing or participating in unscheduled events".* (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p.8). It was decided that including observations as part of the mixed methodological approach to this research would provide the additional opportunity for the researcher to ascertain further information which may be useful to the discussion.

Crucially, observations allow the researcher to witness activities and events first hand as opposed to many other methodologies which rely on the accounts of others. "*A key advantage of conducting observations is that you can observe what people actually do or say, rather than what they say they do"* (Sadik, 2013, p.1). There are many reasons why a participant's account of an event may differ from the reality: intentional dishonesty, perception, failing memory, to name a few. Observations allow the researcher the opportunity to view a situation in real time and keep a record based on their own interpretation. This could be considered a benefit of this methodology, however the researcher must always be aware of the influence that their subjective interpretation can have on the findings.

An additional advantage of observations in social research is that they do not rely on the willingness of participants to offer information. In questionnaires or interviews, the data captured is limited by the level of information that the participant wants to (or is able) to provide.

> "*Often some respondents do not like to speak about themselves to an outsider. Some*
>
> *people do not have time or required skill to provide important information to the*
>
> *researcher. Although observation cannot always overcome such problems, still*
>
> *relatively speaking it requires less active co-operation and willingness of respondents."*
>
> (Choudhary, 2017, p.8).

The topic of this research (radicalisation and policing of vulnerable communities) is somewhat sensitive, for this reason it is possible that the participants' willingness to offer full and honest information could be hindered by the fear of repercussion or judgement, even though their identity will remain anonymous. Specifically in relation to police, Spano noted in his research on police culture that often police officers and staff are cautious of the judgement of others and thus do not always answer openly; *"police are suspicious of outsiders and are not accustomed to getting their decisions scrutinized"* (Spano, 2007, p.453). Assuming this is correct, it suggests limitations in the level of information that would be provided by the Tier One participants through formal interviews and to a lesser extent observations. Consequently, efforts were made during the preparation stage of the fieldwork to build up trust between the researcher and participants. Due largely to the more informal and passive style of observations, it was decided that they would enable the researcher to capture information beyond what the participants were prepared to offer in the interviews.

Whilst there are many advantages to utilising observations within this research (some of which have been highlighted above), there are also disadvantages which the researcher had to consider when planning the fieldwork. Perhaps the most significant limitation of observations for this type of study is that the findings are susceptible to observer bias. As with any testimony or account of an event, there are factors which can cause variations or inaccuracies. Ultimately, the record of an observation session is determined by the observer and what they have interpreted, making it a subjective account. There are steps that can be taken to minimise this, often referred to as 'impression management', however, it is important to acknowledge that the record is no more than the observers perception of what happened when assessing the validity of any findings.

Another key consideration for researchers carrying out observations is the impact that being observed has on the behaviour of those being observed. This is commonly known as the Hawthorne effect, first

coined by French (1953) in his study of social experiments. The fundamental principle is that people act differently when they know that they are being watched: *"The term is often used to suggest that individuals may change their behaviour due to the attention they are receiving from researchers rather than because of any manipulation of independent variables"* (Cherry, 2017, p.1). Although the legitimacy of the Hawthorne Effect has been challenged (see Yunker, 1993), it is crucial for any researcher to take into consideration the potential impact that their research has on the topic matter or participants being studied.

One disadvantage of observations, which is pertinent to this research, is that the observation does not always help build an understanding of why certain behaviours occur. Observations can provide a full description of an event or situation but rarely provide the opportunity for the observer to explore an issue further or identify causal factors which emanate outside of the scenario being observed. With other methods available - such as interviews or focus groups, the researcher can react to an event and ask follow up questions to explore answers in more detail. This sort of interaction with the participant during an observation session would likely alter the situation and thus could hinder the validity of the findings. There are various approaches available which allow for different levels of observer involvement (discussed later), however, generally speaking it would not be appropriate to interfere or direct the situation being observed around the needs of the research. As the main purpose of the observations for this research was to validate previous findings, rather than generate primary data, this was not perceived to be a significant weakness, but was something that was considered when the methods were being chosen for the fieldwork.

Format of observations

Observations can take many forms, the first task was to decide on the most suitable format for this element of the research. Three defining features of observations are: whether they include participant involvement, whether they are overt or covert, and whether they are structured or unstructured. This

chapter outlines the decisions made, planning and ethical considerations and the outcome of their implementation.

Participant or non-participant observation

Observations for the purpose of social research are often split into two distinct categories, participant observations and non-participant observations, for a wider discussion of the distinction between observation and participant observation see Savage (2000). Participant observations are defined by DeWalt and DeWalt as: *"the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities"* (2002, p.7). The key defining feature of participant observation is the active involvement of the researcher in the scenario. In this type of fieldwork, the researcher would become an active member within the social group that they are studying, taking part in activities in the same way as any other participant, whilst observing the actions of the others. Alternatively, non-participant observation is based on the premise that the researcher will not play an active role in the social group or situation they are observing, and will not intentionally influence the actions of the participants in anyway: *"When the observer observes the group passively from a distance without participating in the group activities, it is known as non-participant observation"* (Choudhary, 2017, p.1). Whilst there are advantages and disadvantages for both, it was decided that non-participant observations would be more suitable for this research, the reasons for this decision are explored below.

As Tier One participants are operational police officers and PCSOs it would not have been practical for the researcher to assume an active role in the scenarios being observed. The researcher was at the time a fully warranted Special Constable within West Yorkshire Police, so legally would have been able to work alongside the participants on a shift. After careful consideration however, it was decided that this option would have had too much of an impact on the situation to provide a valid basis for observations. The purpose of the observations was to gain an insight into a typical shift for the participants; a typical

shift for most of these participants would not involve working alongside a Special Constable. This could have affected the calls that the participants were deployed to and their behaviour at these calls, as the participants would potentially be sent to different calls as a 'double-crew' as oppose to if they were 'single-crewed' and would also have more options available to them at the calls for example when dealing with violence or multiple parties. It was, therefore, decided that non-participant observations would provide a more accurate account of a typical shift for the participants, as their deployment to calls would not be impacted nor would their options for dealing with said calls on arrival.

Although the use of non-participant observations minimised the risk of direct influence over the participants' activities and behaviours, there would still be the potential for inadvertent influence (Hawthorne effect). This will be explored in more detail when the options of covert and overt observations are discussed, but it was still an important consideration at this early stage of planning. It is crucial that the observer is aware of and able to determine the impact that their presence has on the situation being observed, even when carrying out non-participant observations. For this research, it was likely that the presence of an observer would not only have an impact on the participants, but also the members of the public that they would come into contact with during the observation session. It was also important to consider the moral and legal duties placed on the researcher as a warranted Special Constable; should one of the participants need assistance or be put in danger during the observations the researcher would have a duty to help. This would effectively invalidate the findings of the session as the main boundaries of the methodology would have been broken through the active involvement. Following discussions with senior members of West Yorkshire Police and supervision team, it was agreed that the impact of being observed would be less during non-participant observations than with participant observations, and the schedule of observations could factor in time to carry out additional sessions should any of them be invalidated. With this in mind the format of non-participant observations was chosen as the most suitable method for this research.

<u>Overt or covert</u>

It was crucial to decide whether the observations would be overt or covert. Overt observations are where the participants are aware that they are being observed for the purposes of the research, covert observations take place without the participants' knowledge:

> *"Overt observations refer to the researcher being open about their intentions in the field and ensuring all members of the social group are aware of what is happening. Covert observations involve the researcher not informing members of the group the reason for their presence; keeping their true intentions secret."* (Bandura, 1961, p.575).

There were practical and ethical considerations in relation to both of these options which were taken into account during the planning of the observations.

Practically, it would have been very difficult to carry out covert observations of the Tier One participants whilst they were on duty given the mobile nature of their work: *"Access to organizational settings may be influenced by the researcher's choice to adopt overt or covert research"* (Grills, 1998, p.55). Whilst technology can provide options to enable some fieldwork to be carried out covertly i.e. through the use of recording devices, this was not feasible for this research. The observer would also need to make themselves known to the participants prior to the research to enable them to observe them within police buildings or to travel with them during the shift. There are also ethical challenges in using covert observations which are not an issue with the overt approach. As the participants would not be aware that they are being observed, there would be no opportunity to gain full consent. Furthermore, once the observations had been completed, the observer/researcher would have to make themselves known to the participant and declare the covert observation activity, this could lead to distrust and potentially jeopardise any further fieldwork. Covert observations can also fail ethical standards regarding the right to privacy:

> *"Covert observation contravenes two important ethical believes that it does not provide participants with the opportunity for 'informed consent' and thus it involves deception and lack of trust. It can also be taken to be a violation or invasion of the principle of privacy"* (Norris, 2003, p.128).

It was decided that overt observations would be the better choice for this research, as it would be more practical and would not create the same level of ethical challenge that covert methods would. All participants to this research were willing volunteers who had very little to gain from acting in a certain way, it was therefore not deemed proportionate to carry out covert observations, particularly given that this element of the fieldwork would not be used to generate any primary data.

Structured or unstructured

Observations for the purpose of social research are often separated into two categories, structured and unstructured. Structured observations are focused on certain elements of the scenario being observed and are often used to provide specific data to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Unstructured observations look at the scenario as a whole without focus on a particular element or point of interest. (Spradley, 2016).

Structured observations often require more planning as consideration must be given to the specific elements or behaviours being targeted and the sampling methods to target them. Three main sampling methods used are time sampling, event sampling and point sampling (McLeod, (2015). Each of these methods reduce the amount of time spent actively observing the participants but the selection is based on different rules. Time sampling follows the same principles of systematic sampling and often follows one simple rule such as observing participants for 10 minutes, every hour. This can be beneficial to research where limited resources are available or where convenience is a priority, but findings can be limited as the observations may miss brief or infrequent behaviours which may still be significant to the research. Event sampling is used to focus on a specific behaviour, for example recording of the

observation will only take place when a certain behaviour or scenario is happening. This can be useful to study the behaviour in question and the subsequent reaction, but can also result in findings being limited to certain elements of the study meaning that wider context or potentially opposing evidence is missed: *"…it is possible to miss a certain amount or selectively concentrate on the more "interested" aspects. This is observer bias, and challenges the reliability of the observation*" (Brewer, 2008, p.9). Point sampling focuses on observing the behaviour of specific participants as oppose to the wider group. This can be a useful way of minimising the resource required to observe larger homogenous groups, but again findings are limited solely to the behaviours of the chosen individuals and the presumption that they are reflective of the wider group: *"…this is an example of 'chance response tendencies'. The behaviour observed is not representative of the behaviour generally."* (Dunnette, 1996, p.9).

Unstructured observations are used when the researcher aims to observe as much of a situation as possible and is not focused on one specific element or behaviour. The main benefit of unstructured observation is that it provides a holistic overview of the situation being observed and does not exclude unexpected behaviours or occurrences. The information provided is generally narrative, though at it is difficult to gain valid statistical data through unstructured observations. However, the qualitative information it does offer can be richer than that generated through structured observations. The main disadvantages of unstructured observations are generally associated with the recording and analysis of the sessions. The researcher would typically be required to record their observations throughout the entire session as opposed to pre-defined sections or elements of it. Not only can this generate a much larger record for analysis, it can mean that much of the observation record is of little significance to the research aims. Carrying out systematic analysis of these records can be challenging as they may differ substantially from each other, depending on the activity of the situation being observed, making it difficult to identify valid themes. For this reason, unstructured observations are often avoided if data (qualitative or quantitative) are sought, but are useful at the beginning or end of a research project to inform future fieldwork or verify earlier findings.

It was decided that unstructured observations would suit the purposes of this research better than structured observations, given that the aim of this fieldwork was not to generate new data but to verify findings from the interviews and activity reports provided by Tier One participants. It was determined that unstructured observations, which study the shifts in their entirety, would allow the researcher to draw more valid conclusions and comparisons of data generated by the different methodologies used.

To summarise, the researcher decided to carry out unstructured, overt, non-participant involvement observations of the Tier One participants. It was felt that this would provide the most effective opportunity to observe participants on a typical shift, minimise the risk of inadvertent influence of the situations being observed, and crucially, allow for valid conclusions to be made regarding the verification of previous data sets and findings.

Planning

Once the type of observation had been determined, the researcher could plan the sessions in more detail. Decisions were made regarding how many observations would take place, how long they would last, when they would take place and which participants would be involved.

<u>Number of observations</u>

There were 19 Tier One participants taking part in this research across the four case study teams. By the end of the fieldwork period, each of the participants had provided activity reports spanning the 12 months. Given that the key purpose of the observations was to verify this data, it was deemed necessary to observe all of the Tier One participants. These participants could be defined by role: PC, PCSO and PEO, and consideration was given to observing a smaller sample of each of these role groups. However, it was felt that observing 19 participants over the course of a year was a reasonable undertaking. Covering all participants also strengthened the validity of any findings relating to the comparison between activity

report and interview datasets. All of the participants gave consent to be observed, as did their line managers and the overall organisation (West Yorkshire Police).

Frequency and duration of observation sessions

The aim of this methodology was to observe the participants on a typical shift to understand what the PCs, PCSOs and PEOs did during their time on duty and crucially whether this was accurately reflected in the activity reports. Given that there were two PCs and two PCSOs in each case study, it was not deemed necessary to observe every participant for the full length of a shift. It was decided that each NPT observation session should be split in half, with the first half observing a PC and the second half observing a PCSO. This would then be repeated to observe the other two NPT participants in each case study, meaning that all four participants could be observed in just two shifts. One final observation session for each of the PEOs would then be scheduled in to ensure that their shifts could be observed too. This approach meant that the full duration of a typical shift for each of the roles could be captured, whilst reducing the amount of time and resource required, from 19 sessions to just 11. The below table demonstrates this schedule.

Table 13. Observations – planning time table.

Session	Case Study	First half	Second Half
1	1	PC1A	PCSO1A
2	1	PCSO1B	PC1B
3	1	PEO1	
4	2	PC2A	PCSO2A
5	2	PCSO2B	PC2B
6	2	PEO2	
7	3	PC3A	PCSO3A
8	3	PCSO3B	PC3B
9	3	PEO3	
10	4	PC4A	PCSO4A
11	4	PCSO4B	PC4B

The table shows that of the two 'NPT' sessions for each case study, the participants were scheduled according to role, with the first half of the first session spent observing a PC, and the first half of the second session observing a PCSO. This was intentionally conducted to avoid any inadvertent bias in what activity the participants were involved in through different times in the shift. It is common for an NPT, PC or PCSO to carry out different activities in the first part of their shift than the second due to changing demands on them. This could be due to the type of calls that they get deployed to, i.e. calls later in the evening could be more closely linked to alcohol related crime, and similarly the first half of the shift may be the better time to make enquiries with members of the public. Ensuring that each role was observed across both halves of the shift would minimise the risk of only observing certain time periods of their typical shift. For similar reasons it was also decided that the observations of PCs and PCSOs would be evenly split into one early shift and one late shift, for each case study area. This would ensure that any differences in typical activity between an early shift and a late shift were accounted for.

Span of observation schedule

Another element of the observation schedule which required planning and consideration was the time frame over which the observations would be carried out. The wider fieldwork period for this research took place over 12 months, with activity reports being filled in on alternate months. It was also deemed important that the observations took place across the 12 month fieldwork period to ensure the information captured was reflective of the entire period and not simply a point in time which could be influenced by seasons, policy changes, or significant events.

As the main aim of the observations was to verify the data in the activity reports it was logical for the observations to be carried out on the same months that they were filled out. Moreover, the interviews were scheduled for the alternate months and required more resource from the researcher, so for capacity reasons, it was considered more practical for the observations to be scheduled for the same months as the activity reports. This meant that two observations sessions were scheduled in during each of the

'active' months, (leaving an additional session as a contingency). The researcher started by selecting the 12 appropriate shifts to observe by accessing the participant's team shift planners, ensuring a mix of early shifts, late shifts, weekday and weekend shifts. The next step was to schedule in the three PEO sessions, at the start, middle and end of the 12 month fieldwork period. Finally, the sessions (as shown on the table above) were randomly aligned to one of the 12 scheduled shifts. This was felt to be a robust way of ensuring a stratified sample for observations which would give strength to any findings. It was also important to note that whilst the participants were aware that they would be observed in the conditions outlined above, they were not informed of when this would take place. This minimised the risk of them intentionally planning to focus on certain tasks or activities beforehand, the reasons for this are detailed in the next section.

Ethical considerations

Once the overarching plan for the observations had been finalised with regards to when they would be carried out and how long they would last, consideration turned to the more general issues related to carrying out observations for research, for example how anonymity would be maintained, observer security, the recording of results etc.

Anonymity

In order to secure the anonymity of participants throughout the fieldwork, each participant was given an alias and the NPT that they were attached to was referred to only in general terms i.e. NPT 1. Whilst the nature of this research and their roles meant that their identity could not be guaranteed, steps were taken to maintain it where possible and all participants were aware of the risk and gave consent to take part. However, carrying out observations of the participants whilst they were on duty also meant that they would likely interact with members of the public who had not consented to taking part in this research, bringing with it further challenges relating to anonymity. For this reason, the record kept of the observations would not refer to any defining features of these individuals, and would simply refer to them

as subject A, subject B etc. Crucially, the focus of the observation was the participant not those that they are engaging with. Where it was necessary or relevant to the research, the record kept could refer to key characteristics such as their ethnicity, reason for interaction, or behaviour, but would not include any specific details by which they could be identified, for example: "*PC1A engaged arrested subject A for burglary, a white male who was hostile and aggressive*". No further details were captured and any information published was anonymised as far as possible, similarly the time, dates and location of the observation remained confidential and were deleted at the first opportunity. This ensured that no individual or incident referred to in this research could be cross referenced against court records or other publicly available resources. These steps were deemed reasonable and proportionate to protecting the anonymity of individuals who may have been noted in the observation record.

Safety and security

The safety and security of the observer and participants was paramount. Unlike clinical research, these observations took place in the natural setting of the participants' shift, ultimately meaning that the majority took place in public. The nature of a typical shift meant that the observer had very little control over where the observations would take place or the scenarios which would be observed. This meant that planning security and safety measures was slightly more challenging than with other methods used in the fieldwork.

The researcher did ensure that the research supervisors and an acquaintance knew when an observation session was planned and which police station it would be starting from, and contact was made before and after each session. Key benefits were that the participants being observed were aware that they were being observed, had consented, and perhaps more crucially were serving police officers and PCSOs who were trained to maintain the safety and security of themselves, their teams and the public. The key concern, however, was that the participants (and thus the observer) could be required to enter situations which could be dangerous as part of their shift. Whilst the participants had varied levels of protective equipment on them - including stab vests, batons, CS spray, handcuffs and airwave radios, it was decided

that the observer would only have a stab vest. As a serving Special Constable, there was the option for the observer to take more equipment, but after a risk assessment with a senior West Yorkshire Police officer was carried out, it was deemed unnecessary and could perhaps cause more problems and blur the lines between observer and on duty officer. Prior to the observations taking place, the observer made sure that the participants were aware of the observer's intentions and that if the participant felt at any time that the observer was hindering their safety, they could end the session. Similarly the observer made it clear that they would not enter a situation that they were not comfortable with and stressed that safety was more important that any research findings.

Record of sessions

When planning to record the observation sessions a number of decisions had to be made about what would be recorded and how. Unstructured observations are generally less prescriptive with regards to the information that is gathered - the intention is to observe the situation in its entirety as oppose to focusing on specific elements. With structured observations is it usual practice to have predetermined questions regarding the behaviour or activity to prompt the observer into recording relevant information which can later be coded. This practice is less common with unstructured observations to minimise the risk of excluding valid information. However, because the primary purpose of these observations was to verify the information provided in activity reports (and to a lesser extent, interviews) it was decided that the observer should seek to record information which would allow them to fill out an activity report for comparative purposes at the end of the session. Steps were taken to ensure that the information recorded was not limited to this activity report though and the observer sought to capture full descriptions of all activity that took place during the sessions regardless of whether this would be captured in the report. There would also be an emphasis on the interpretation of the activity and behaviour of the participants based on the observer's opinion as part of the record of the sessions to ensure a wholesome view of the sessions.

Capturing this level of information would require the observer to either digitally record the sessions (using audio or video) or write notes of the observations during or after the sessions. It was felt that the use of digital devices could feel too intrusive for participants, affecting their natural behaviour (for an overview of the potential impact of recording devices see Bowman, 1994), furthermore any members of the public may see the digital recording device and consequently act differently or become agitated thus altering the natural situation that this research is seeking to observe. Digitally recording these sessions would also create additional risks for data security and anonymity of the participants, which would be heightened by the fact that the observation sessions would be taking place in public. It was felt that the safest and least disruptive option would be to avoid the use of digital recording devices and instead notes would be taken. It was decided that written notes would be taken during the session with additional writing up time scheduled for immediately afterwards. Given the potentially sensitive nature of some of the scenarios that would be observed, it was felt that the note taking should be done in a subtle way to avoid provocation or altered behaviours. Whilst it would be possible to wait until the end of each session to write down notes to avoid this, it was decided that the risk of the observer forgetting important details or not capturing a full record was too high with this approach. Instead the decision was made to equip the observer with a small notebook to keep a written record of pertinent notes during the session. This notebook included blank pages at the front for open note taking as well as prompts relating to the questions in the activity report, in addition to this, the observer also filled out a blank activity report following the guidance given to the participants for comparison during the analysis stage. The notebook would be small enough to put away in the pocket of the stab vest if it did not feel suitable to openly take notes at any time during the session much like a police pocket note book. Using a small notebook as oppose to an A4 clipboard would be more suitable and feel less recognisable as an observation tool, thus, having less of an impact on the participants and the individuals that they may come into contact with. It is important to note that, if the observer was questioned by any individual about their purpose and presence, the observer would be open and honest about the fieldwork and would provide an information card regarding the research, reassuring them, that their identity would be protected, it would also have the contact information for the

senior West Yorkshire Police officer who authorised the research. Once the sessions had finished, time was set aside to finish writing up the notes and filling out the activity report following the same guidance given to the participants, this would ensure a full and holistic record of the observation which included, but was note solely focused on comparing the activity reports.

Implementation

Overall the observations went well and provided enough good quality information to draw valid conclusions relating to the information provided in the activity reports and interviews. Opting to choose unstructured observations was perhaps the most beneficial choice for this fieldwork as it enabled a full record to be captured of sessions which were vastly varied. Had the observer been restricted to recording activity related only to predetermined issues or only at set stages through the shift it is highly likely that important information would have been missed. Enabling the observer to take notes throughout the session meant that information was captured relating to the roles and activities of the Tier One participants that had not been found through the earlier stages of fieldwork. In particular the differing levels of supervision across the case studies became apparent during the observation sessions, although this was based on only 11 sessions and so would benefit from further validation, it appeared that the Sergeant's involvement with the PCs and PCSOs in each of the case study areas was very different. Some Sergeants were very 'hands-on' with the PCs and PCSOs going out on patrol and assisting at calls, however in some of the other case studies the Sergeant appeared to spend the majority of their time in the station. The relevance of this finding in relation to earlier analysis of the interviews will be discussed in the following section.

The decision to mix the NPT sessions between observing PCs and PCSOs also proved to be beneficial. On average each NPT observation session lasted around four hours, meaning that for each case study around eight hours was spent observing the PCs and eight hours observing the PCSOs, given that the average PEO shift is also eight hours it provided a balance to the analysis of the observations. Spending

eight hours with each role in each case study provided ample opportunity to capture information relevant to this research, given the purpose of these observation was not to produce any further data it was felt that this was proportionate to the needs of the research. Although there were some slight logistical problems associated with switching between the participants mid-shift, due to their locations and ongoing tasks, this was not considered to be significant and did not hinder the research.

A key planning issue for the observation related to whether the observer (as a serving Special Constable) could be a non-participant observer or whether they would be required to put themselves 'on-duty' during the session. No situation occurred during any of the sessions where the observer felt that they would have to take a more active role and assist the participant, thus ending the session. This was not only beneficial for the research, as it resulted in uninterrupted observation sessions, but also meant that there was no additional risk to the safety of the observer or the participants. Furthermore, at no point during the sessions did the observer feel that they were in danger or that the research should be suspended.

One final point to make regarding the implementation of the observation sessions, was that the overt nature of the sessions also helped to build relations with the participants. On multiple occasions during 'down-time' on the shifts, the participants took the opportunity to discuss the research in more detail and offered their opinions in relation to the research aims. Each of these were captured and featured as part of the qualitative analysis of the observation sessions. Should a covert approach have been taken, such statements would not have been made or captured.

Findings

The analysis of the observation records included a comparison of the activity reports filled out by the observer and the participants (as detailed in chapter five), and a wider thematic review of the observation notes from the sessions.

Generally speaking, the activity reports completed by the observer reflected the 'average' report filled out by the participants. Though these comparisons must be considered in the context of very different sample sizes, the similarities were interesting nonetheless.

<u>Comparison of participant activity reports and observer activity reports</u>

Geographical areas

With regards to the geographical areas which the participants spent most of their time; the observations found that, during the sessions spent with the PEOs, all of the areas commonly noted in their activity reports were visited during the observation session. The familiarity with members of the community in these areas was apparent, leading the observer to note during one session that: "*this did not seem manufactured at all, in one of the community group meetings they were expecting the PEO as they do on a weekly basis*" (Observation session 3-3). The observation sessions spent with the NPTs showed a similar picture but in some cases it appeared that the participant was making an additional effort to patrol some of the 'vulnerable areas' noted in their activity reports. Although this could not be confirmed, statements were made such as: "*If we get chance later, we'll try and head down to **named area***" (Participant PCSO2A). This statement could be interpreted as a general effort to patrol different areas against competing demands, but did leave the observer feeling slightly uncertain as to whether this was for the benefit of the research. On the whole, the activity reports filled out by the observer did substantiate the type of activity described in the activity reports filled out by the NPT participants with regards to the geographical area that they spent most of their time, thus going some way to verifying the earlier findings.

Activities recorded

With regards to the activities that the participants carried out on a typical shift, the observations showed a striking similarity between what was declared on the activity reports and what was witnessed during the observations across all roles and case studies. Perhaps what was most interesting was the frustrations of the participants noted by the observer which reflected the sentiments shared during the interviews. In

every observation session carried out, the participant referred to a desire to do more than what they had capacity for: "*It would be good to arrest somebody and not spend the rest of the shift in custody*" (Participant PC4A): "*I've stopped writing to-do lists now, because you never get chance to even look at it, let alone actually tick anything off*" (Participant PC2A). Although this was less prominent with the PEOs, it was still reflective of the findings in the activity reports and interviews. During two of the NPT observation sessions the observer spent the vast majority of the shift within the police station, only leaving the building for approximately 90 minutes, the rest was spent watching the PCs and PCSOs in briefings, filling out paper work, inputting crimes and intelligence reports on to the computer, making telephone enquires or interviewing subjects.

Community cohesion

The activity reports also required the participants to disclose any community disharmony that had come to their attention during their shift. The initial findings from the activity reports showed varying levels of understanding across roles with PEOs providing more detailed and informed responses to this than their NPT counterparts, and likewise PCSOs showing a higher understanding of local issues than PCs. However, the activity reports filled out by the observer could not fully verify this finding due to lack of sufficient data. In total there were 11 observation sessions carried out, (eight with the NPT participants and three with the PEOs), during these sessions there were only two instances where 'new' information about community issues came to light, both of which occurred during the PEO observations. Although there were numerous discussions with community members regarding disharmony and cultural issues, these were mainly during the PEO observations and were the product of follow up engagement from previous community work. The fact that none of this information, new or otherwise, was brought to the attention of the PCs is interesting and does go some way to supporting the finding that PCs are less engaged with their local communities than PEOs - but in itself it could not be considered full corroboration. Although the observer found no reason to doubt the earlier findings from the activity reports and interviews on this topic through observation, there was also not enough evidence to verify it either.

Thematic review of observation notes

The general notes from the observations also provided insights into the roles and opinions of NPT staff that had not been apparent through the earlier fieldwork stages.

Influence of supervisors

Perhaps the most interesting was the varying involvement of the NPT Sergeants with their teams which was referred to earlier. In two of the case studies, the Sergeant was particularly engaged with the activities of their team and on multiple occasions would attend calls with the PCs and PCSOs in question, whereas on the other two case studies, the Sergeant would remain predominantly in their police station. Whilst this variation is interesting in itself, perhaps the more pertinent point to note was the effect that the Sergeant's presence had on the rest of the team. The participants from the two case studies which had a more 'hands-on' Sergeant appeared less focused on the community engagement element of their role than participants from the other case studies. This is somewhat mirrored in the activity reports through the times spent dedicated to proactive patrol and engagement, however the reason was not necessarily known. The observer noted this on multiple occasions throughout the various sessions, stating: "…*this team as a whole seems more concerned with ticking off tasks that the Sergeant gives them, than spending additional time in communities,"* (Observation session 2B), followed in a separate session by: "…*as soon as the Sergeant arrives at the scene, there seems to be an urgency to get the job done and get to the outstanding log"* (Observation session 4A). The observations would suggest that the Sergeant's presence added pressure (intentional or otherwise) to the PCs and PCSOs to be as productive as possible with regards to meeting the multiple demands placed on the team. This could have been at the detriment of proactive community engagement. It is important to note, however, that this is based solely on the observer's interpretation of the situation and could not, without further exploration, be evidenced in a quantifiable way.

Opinions of Prevent

A further point that was noted across many of the sessions was that when the participants had the opportunity to chat with the observer, for example during car journeys to calls or on meal breaks, it seemed that those who had some knowledge of Prevent felt that it needed review. It should be noted that this was only discussed with five of the participants (three PEOs, one PC and one PCSO), and they were all supportive of Prevent and the need for such a strategy, however they all felt that it had been marred by its history.

"*When Prevent first came about, it targeted Muslims, there's no denying that, but it's not the same strategy now. We've come a long way as a service since then, and Prevent has changed for the better too. Maybe it needs re-branding, but then again that might not help build trust either, it needs looking at to keep the public happy, but I honestly don't know what you'd do to make it better*". (Participant PEO1).

This was echoed by a different PEO who felt that Prevent should be regularly reviewed in the same manner as any policy or practice, but that there is an unease around the strategy which inhibits the willingness of authorities to do so:

"*We're a public service and we want to do the best for the public, to do that we need to keep reviewing what we're doing and making it better. Prevent is no different to that, but it's such a touchy subject, no government is going to be the one to stop Prevent unless they can come up with something else to put in its place sharpish.*" (Participant PEO3).

A PCSO also noted the need for a review of Prevent in light of current pressures on the police service, stating that the strategy would only work with additional police resources:

"*Prevent is all well and good and the principle works: community policing prevents terrorism. We all know this, we know community policing is the cornerstone of counter terrorism, but they've taken away community policing and are still expecting to counter terrorism. They either need to put the beat bobbies back, or pick a new strategy because we can't do it with the numbers we've got*". (Participant PCSO2B)

The participants who offered these opinions all appeared to be very passionate and to some extent angry when they did so, which is interesting in itself as the same degree of emotion or strength of opinion did not come through on the earlier interviews with these participants when they were asked their thoughts on the matter. This is perhaps due to the more informal setting provided during the observations, than in the interviews, combined with the fact that the interviews took place at the start of the fieldwork period before any real rapport had been built with the participants. The observer interpreted these as genuine concerns and beliefs of the participants, it appeared that not only did the participants in question feel that Prevent should be reviewed to improve it, but that Prevent is fundamentally a good strategy which has been hindered by the austerity cuts to policing.

Summary

In summary, the decision to use overt, unstructured, non-participant observations to verify the findings of the activity reports and interview aspects of the fieldwork proved beneficial. The implementation of the observation sessions was smooth and did not require a vast amount of time or resource from the researcher, and the data provided was useful not only in verifying the earlier findings but also to further inform discussion around the research aims. Although not all of the earlier findings could be corroborated due to the boundaries of the data produced by the observation sessions, the researcher found no reason to doubt the declarations made by the Tier One participants during the interviews or activity reports detailed in previous chapters. Key findings generally related to the pressures that the participants felt

under in completing their daily duties. The participants' concerns around their lack of capacity and capability to fully engage with communities were apparent, and the prioritisation of other policing tasks over community engagement was evident in the tasks allocated to the participants during the observation sessions. The findings from the observations echo earlier judgments that NPTs are continually struggling to maintain levels of engagement with their communities for general policing purposes and the challenge is even greater when engagement for the purpose of Prevent is added to their duties.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

This research aimed to ascertain the extent to which strong community cohesion was linked to preventing extremism, what the current role of NPTs were in the Prevent strategy, and to ultimately inform debate around whether they should or could be utilised differently. It has considered a wealth of literature regarding theory, policies and practice around community policing and preventing extremism to explore the current situation and potential avenues for change. The mixed methods approach to fieldwork generated substantial datasets which have informed discussion around the key research aims and provided an evidence base for suggestions around the use of NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent strategy going forward.

The significance of community engagement within the Prevent Strategy

Existing literature has raised a wide range of debates relating to the proposed links between community policing and community cohesion, and similarly the links between poor community cohesion and vulnerability to extremism (Innes & Jones, 2006). Whilst there is wide discord amongst academics regarding the causes of radicalisation and the appropriateness of the Government's response to it through the Prevent strategy, there is a level of agreement that poor community cohesion could be a contributing factor to radicalisation (see Innes & Jones 2002; Crenshaw, 1981; Backes, 2007). The literature review provided an overview of the key debates around the concept of radicalisation and showed a consensus amongst key models which each rely on social or external factors as well as psychological causes. Whilst termed differently across the varying models, they all refer to community cohesion as one such social factor.

The premise that poor community cohesion can contribute to a social setting where extremist influences can thrive, was supported by the findings of the focus groups held with community members in each case

study area. On the topic of preventing extremism, discussions frequently concluded on the point that stronger communities would prevent extremism earlier; "*If people were more tolerant of differences there wouldn't be terrorism*" (FG Participant 4B). This essentially supports the principles which the Prevent Strategy was built upon, that by working with communities the police and partners can help Prevent people being drawn into extremism. Interestingly many focus group participants felt that the duty of preventing terrorism sat with communities first; "*Every terrorist has a mother and father, friends and a community who failed to do their job, before the police failed theirs.*" (FG Participant 2A). Again, whilst there were many topics debated within the focus group sessions, the role that good community cohesion played within preventing extremism was an area of agreement.

Whilst some would challenge the link between poor cohesion and radicalisation, the opposition is generally based on the argument that not all radicalised individuals come from areas of poor cohesion, and thus it is not an absolute causal factor. This is a logical premise and one that this research did not seek to refute, however the literature review and results from the focus groups combined, did show that poor community cohesion *could* be a contributing factor to radicalisation.

This however is not enough to meet the first aim of this research; *to understand the significance of community engagement in the Prevent strategy.* The research aim is focused on police engagement with communities, and specifically how this contributes to community cohesion, not simply strong community cohesion in isolation. Again existing literature has explored the theories, context, policies and practices relating to police engagement with communities through the concept of 'community policing'. Whilst there have been failings in certain community policing policies and practices throughout the years (see Thomas, 2011), the research has showed how the theory that 'good community policing helps to improve community cohesion' is one that stands up to scrutiny. The literature review outlines the support for this premise and the evidence base that has been built up over the years to inform and improve community policing practices for the benefit of community cohesion; "*whilst there is only weak evidence of community*

engagement reducing crime…there is fairly strong positive evidence that it … increases feelings of safety and improves police-community relations and perceptions" (NPIA, 2012. p.3). There is very little challenge to this concept throughout academia, and again the focus groups held with community members from the case study area supported the principle. Discussions in the focus group sessions alluded to a link between good police engagement and good community relations; when the police are shown to be making efforts across *all* communities, the cohesion between these communities builds as there is less cause for resentment or distrust. Between the literature review and the findings of the focus group it was clear that good community policing could lead to improved community cohesion.

When the concept that 'good community policing can help to improve community cohesion' is combined with the first element discussed in this research that 'good community cohesion can help to prevent extremism' it is logical to then conclude that 'good community policing can help to prevent extremism'. The support for this hypothesis, as evidenced through the literature review and focus group chapters of this thesis, would suggest that the community engagement <u>is significant</u> to the Prevent Strategy. Whilst the debates around Prevent continue, this research would suggest that the Government's decision to base the strategy so firmly in community policing principles was entirely rational and justifiable. The research then moved towards understanding how this worked in current practice, and whether any changes needed to be made.

The current function of NPTs within the Prevent Strategy

The preliminary enquiries carried out in preparation for this research pointed to a potential disparity between the use of community policing in the theories behind Prevent as a strategy and Prevent in practice. The data generated from the interviews, activity reports and observations did confirm that whilst there was a heavy focus on community policing principles in the wording of the Prevent Strategy documents (as noted in the literature review), there was little integration of community policing within its day to day delivery.

Fourteen interviews were held with participants; a mix of NPT and Prevent participants were involved in semi-structured interviews which sought to understand their knowledge, experiences, and opinions on the delivery of community policing and the Prevent strategy in their areas. The quality and breadth of data gained from these sessions was invaluable to understanding the current function that NPTs play within delivering the strategy and not only alluded to the level of involvement that NPTs have, but also the reasons for such. Findings from the interviews pointed to a minimal knowledge of Prevent across NPT participants. When asked to explain what they knew of Prevent, the vast majority could provide only very basic information and with very little confidence in their answers. Encouragingly they did all know how to seek further information or advice if needed, and there were examples of good interactions between NPT staff and PEOs but this was by no means to a standard which could be described as fully integrated. As noted above, the Prevent Strategy was clearly drafted around the intention that NPTs would be at the forefront of its delivery, however the fact that NPT participants in this research had such low levels of knowledge and understanding around the Prevent Strategy clearly showed that this was not happening in practice.

Within West Yorkshire Police, PEOs are 'embedded' within set NPTs to improve integration, information sharing and joint working. However the results from the interviews showed that a lack of central systematic guidance on how the Prevent teams and NPTs should integrate has caused varied practices across the case study areas. Some PEOs were clearly more active within their NPTs than others, but this appeared to be due to individual personalities and subjective interpretations of what their role should be, as oppose to clear guidance from West Yorkshire Police or indeed the Home Office. Consequently, there was no standard practice around when NPTs should be involved in Prevent work and when it should be left to the PEOs. The only commonality across case studies appeared to be that the PEO would make the NPT Sergeant aware of key pieces of their work, however even then, the willingness of the NPT Sergeant in integrating members of their team with this work appeared to be entirely subjective. The

interviews did also provide evidence that many of the NPT staff were cautious of asking the Prevent staff too much due to their association with the traditionally secretive world of counter terrorism. Whilst this was only mentioned specifically on a few occasions, a corresponding theme emerged during interviews with Prevent participants who were at times cautious of sharing information about certain activities with their NPT teams for fear of unwanted interference. Perhaps what is most significant is that on each occasion the NPT participants would have been vetted to the necessary level and able to access the information themselves, if they knew to where look on the police systems. Whilst this does not directly indicate what the current role of NPTs is within Prevent, it does to some extent show a clear boundary in the level of involvement and integration that NPTs do not yet currently cross.

The interviews did show that whilst there was little integration between NPTs and PEOs in practice, there was an acknowledgement across most of the participants, that the work carried out by each team was very similar. Participants clearly recognised the importance of community engagement in all of their roles and their responsibility to work towards strong community cohesion. This would suggest that there is some potential for increased integration between the two areas of working based solely on common objectives alone.

The results from the interviews however, also pointed to increasing separation between the roles due to challenges being placed on the police as a service. This will be discussed in greater detail under discussions around the final research aim (could NPTs be used differently), however it is important to note that the interviews showed how the current roles of NPTs and PEOs have changed significantly in the years prior to this research taking place. A common theme in the interview transcriptions was that the financial cuts to the police service nationally during the past ten years have meant that the police have had to re-prioritise their reducing resources into areas of greatest need. Many police forces (West Yorkshire Police included) have opted to do so by focusing on high-harm incidents and protecting the most vulnerable in society though safeguarding (Burns-Williamson, 2016). According to the majority of

participants taking part in this research, this has resulted in NPTs having less capacity to carry out traditional neighbourhood policing duties including proactive engagement, as they are constantly responding to incidents which take immediate priority. On the contrary, the shift towards safeguarding appears to have had some benefits for Prevent; participants have noted that Prevent has gradually been able to move away from negative perceptions of 'spying' and labels of it being a 'toxic brand' (Kundnani, Thomas), and towards it being recognised as a legitimate form of safeguarding. As the term safeguarding has become more common in policing (and public) language, Prevent teams have been able to capitalise to some extent, with practitioners (and advocates) often comparing the grooming of people vulnerable to CSE by gangs, to the grooming of people vulnerable to radicalisation by extremist groups, in order to 'sell itself' as a strategy to the public. In addition to this, whilst none of the participants referred to any increase in the Prevent budget, resources or capacity, it was noted that they had not been hit as hard as NPTs (or other areas of policing), perhaps because the level of risk associated with protecting vulnerable people from extremism is easily recognised and fits in with the wider safeguarding agenda. This shift in the roles of NPTs and Prevent teams in wider policing is perhaps one of the most crucial findings of this research; it not only helps to clarify the current function of NPTs in Prevent, but also points to the decreasing ability for NPTs to carry out standard community engagement, begging the question should they be expected to play an active role in Prevent and could they do so in the current climate?

The activity reports (corroborated by the observations) also appeared to substantiate many of the findings of the interviews, and showed clear differences in how the NPTs participants and PEOs spent their time. Whilst this was expected to some extent, as they are fundamentally different roles, it was invaluable in quantifying the current function of NPTs in the delivery of Prevent. In summary, PCs spent less time engaging with communities than PEOs, spent less time in vulnerable communities, more time in the police station, and showed lower levels of understanding of ongoing community issues than PEOs. PCSOs generally fell somewhere between the two on each measure. Deeper analysis of the activity reports suggests that the majority of this is due to the broader range of duties that NPT staff were required to

undertake in comparison to Prevent teams. NPT PCs spent a significant amount of time in the police station recording crimes or taking statements, whilst PCSOs noted that a high proportion of their time was spent travelling from one 'beat area' to another. Prevent staff did spend some time carrying out station duties, filling in paperwork and travelling from area to area, but crucially had less paperwork to carry out (as they rarely recorded crimes or carried out investigations), invariably had access to a vehicle for travel, and focused their work in specific communities thus generally covered less geographical space. This ultimately meant that PEOs were able to maintain engagement as a fundamental element of their role, whilst the activity reports showed that this element of the NPT participant's role had been eroded.

The activity reports also reiterated findings from the interviews relating to the change over time of the roles of NPT and Prevent participants. The volume of time that each role dedicated to engagement within communities (for general or Prevent purposes) decreased over the 12 month fieldwork period in every case study. During the observations, multiple participants commented on this (as well as in their interviews), stating that they simply have more tasks to get through in an average shift than they used to, and consequently proactive engagement was generally one of the first tasks to slip. This could point to a more significant cultural challenge for the police service, in that engagement (and traditional community policing principles), were often referred to (during the observations) as a luxury, or nice-to-do, and so often put to the bottom of the list of priorities. Whilst this could be understandable when deciding prioritisation of short-term risks such as attendance at a domestic abuse incident compared to proactive engagement in a school, advocates of community policing and early intervention principles would stress the impact that this has on the police's ability to address long-term risks such as radicalisation. Regardless of whether the function of NPTs within Prevent should change, the police as a service needs to ensure that NPTs and Prevent teams are able to fully engage with communities in their current role.

The activity reports enabled the research to quantify what NPT participants actually contributed with regards to the delivery of the Prevent Strategy on a day to basis. Although they did not capture the entirety

of what an NPT PC or PCSO does on every shift, they provided a strong estimation of the time taken dealing with Prevent related issues, and the actions that they took as a result. Analysis of the 286 activity reports completed by NPT participants showed that 65% of actions taken by them in relation to a 'Prevent related issue' consisted of them filling in an intelligence report and nothing more. On occasion participants explained their rationale for doing so and in every instance it related to; Prevent staff being the 'specialists' who would then deal with it accordingly, a lack of confidence in themselves to progress the action in any other way, and fear around intruding on a secret operation. This points to a wider theme from the research (noted specifically during the interviews), relating to what the current role of NPTs is. The majority of participants explained that the role of NPTs was to capture any relevant information that comes to light during their daily duty and feed it back to the Prevent department and nothing more. Whilst many of the results from this research corroborate this, the finding from the activity reports goes further and points to a reason why; because Prevent staff are the specialists and NPT staff are not. This was also captured quite concisely in an interview with a Prevent Detective Inspector:

> *"NPT officers are the GPs of policing, they need to know enough about everything to get the job done, but Prevent teams are the specialists who focus on this one very niche area of policing"* (Participant DI5).

Again, whether this is right or wrong is almost irrelevant at this stage, however it is crucial to understand that *if* NPTs were to be used differently to their current function (to pass on intelligence), this distinction of roles would have to be adjusted first in order for it to happen.

To summarise, the interviews, activity reports, and observations provided valuable insight into the current role of NPTs within the delivery of Prevent and pointed to some of the reasons for this. The current role of NPTs within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy is to capture and pass on intelligence which may be of interest to Prevent staff. They assist with 'lower levels' of 'Prevent related' engagement and work

alongside Prevent officers on occasion, but there is no systematic guidance regarding when or how this would take place. Whilst all participants recognised the similarities in roles particularly with relation to community engagement, there has been a change in how NPTs are used by the police force in general, which has resulted in decreased capacity to engage with local communities. The workloads on both teams have increased significantly in recent years, and there was concern amongst those in all roles, that they were less in touch with the communities they serve and thus could not fulfil their duties to the extent that they would like. Prevent continued to be seen as a specialist area of policing (although there has been a shift away from traditional counter terrorism and towards more mainstream safeguarding). Whilst NPTs also have a duty to safeguard the most vulnerable, currently the structures and culture within the police force means that their time is predominantly taken up by reactive duties as oppose to proactively engaging with communities or safeguarding vulnerable people against extremism. This research has shown that the current role of NPTs within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy does not resemble the intention set out by Government when the Prevent Strategy was drafted.

Should and could NPTs be utilised differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy

The ultimate aim of this research was to ascertain whether NPTs should be used differently within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, and if so, how this could be done in practice. This research has reviewed the theories behind the Prevent Strategy, the principles of community policing and preventing extremism, the current practices in both areas of policing, and has considered the views and experiences of practitioners and community members affected by the Prevent Strategy.

This research has concluded that NPTs should be utilised <u>more</u> by the police service to deliver the strategy. Whilst there are multiple rationales for this conclusion it has essentially been informed by the findings of the first two research aims in that the research found;

1. That the focus on community policing within the Prevent Strategy <u>was</u> justified.

However;

2. In reality, the current contribution of NPTs in the delivery of the strategy is minimal with NPTs playing no more than a 'supporting role'.

Essentially, the research has provided an evidence base to support existing arguments around the link between good community policing and good community cohesion and subsequently the link between good community cohesion and resilience to extremism. However it also found that whilst many would agree with this hypothesis, the current function of NPTs within Prevent does not match up to this theory, therefore, changes *should* be made so that NPTs play an increased role in the delivery of Prevent.

In addition to the findings around the fundamental research aims, this research also alluded to additional justifications for the increased utilisation of NPTs. The analysis of the interview transcriptions pointed to the ongoing transition from Prevent being a 'pure counter terrorism' strategy, to it being an area of safeguarding. Whilst the research did not set out to explore this dynamic, it is one that has proved to be significant in understanding the current and natural role of NPTs in Prevent. All police officers and staff have a duty to safeguard vulnerable people in society, this is an absolute duty regardless of what team or department they are aligned to, therefore NPT staff who are unable to recognise or respond to a vulnerability (be it exploitation, modern slavery, domestic abuse, or in this case radicalisation), would be failing in their duty. Whilst this does not necessarily mean that NPT staff must know everything about these risks and how to respond, the research has shown that the minimal levels of knowledge and understanding found in the NPT case studies may not be sufficient for them to effectively safeguard a person vulnerable to extremism, therefore the role must be enhanced to allow them to do so.

Another rationale for the increased involvement of NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy stemmed from the findings of the focus groups. In general the focus group participants had a greater familiarity with their local NPT PCs and PCSOs, than they did their PEOs. The reason for this can quite simply be put down to the fact that there are more NPT staff than there are PEOs, however this in itself can be used as

a justification for their increased involvement in Prevent. There were 915 NPT staff in West Yorkshire in 2016/17, but less than 20 PEOs. In contrast the population of West Yorkshire stood at approximately 2.3 million. Whilst no organisation could ever expect to fully engage with every member of its community, logic would suggest that the more members of staff involved, the more members of the public would be reached. As noted in one of the interviews with a PCSO participant; "*we're already in the communities engaging on a range of issues, why wouldn't we engage on radicalisation too?*" (Participant PCSO2). This supports the argument that NPTs should be utilised more in the delivery of Prevent, as both teams are fundamentally responsible for community engagement, but are simply engaging on different topics. Suggesting that NPTs should be more involved in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy was perhaps the simplest of all of the conclusions to be drawn from this research, as it was based on an existing logical hypothesis, was clearly supported by the evidence, and was only challenged on the grounds of capacity and capability of NPTs each of which could be addressed. However, this research could not simply conclude that NPTs should be utilised more, without deducing how this should be done, what elements they would be responsible for, and where the distinction in roles should fall.

The interviews and focus groups found a healthy variety of perspectives regarding how NPTs should be used by Prevent; which generally fell into three options;

1. NPTs should only be responsible for feeding in intelligence and ensuring immediate safeguarding risks could be responded to if needed.
2. NPTs should be better informed and trained to support the PEOs in their tasking and engagement.
3. NPTs should tasked with Prevent related engagement in the same way that PEOs currently are.

This links back to the debate around whether Prevent is an area which is so sensitive it should be the responsibility only of specially trained staff. This research was not able to conclude as to which perspective was correct, however it did provide an evidence base to suggest which approach would be

most suitable in today's policing landscape. The Prevent Duty established that all named organisations (including the police), have a legal responsibility to ensure that Prevent is mainstreamed across all of its departments (HM Government, 2015). Whilst it provides no further definition of what 'mainstreamed' means, the reference to 'all of its departments' clearly means that NPTs should be included in Prevent. This essentially would rule out option one, as this perspective does not require NPTs to develop the appropriate level of knowledge and understanding to meet the obligations in the Prevent Duty. Moreover, an intelligence structure which relies on information being generated by approximately 1,000 NPT staff, but only acted upon by around 20 PEOs would do little more than create pressure points further up the chain in Prevent. Whilst the successful delivery of Prevent is reliant on the successful generation of community intelligence, there must be a responsible and realistic approach for acting upon the growing reams of intelligence that would be generated, this cannot feasibly be left to such a small number of officers regardless of how expertly trained they are.

This leads on to option two; it was the opinion of some of the participants that 'low level' Prevent related intelligence identified by NPTs, should still be fed into the Prevent systems, but should remain the responsibility of the NPT officer to generate or develop through further engagement. Whilst there would inevitably be intelligence reports which require a more comprehensive approach from the wider Prevent team due to the level of sensitivity, the activity reports showed that the vast majority of intelligence reports submitted by NPT officers and PCSOs in relation to Prevent, were actually more closely related to issues of community cohesion rather than extremism. It could be argued that these actually should fall in the remit of the NPT staff as part of their general community engagement, perhaps with the advice and guidance of the Prevent team. This would not only have benefits for the wider police service in that the Prevent teams will have increased capacity to focus on the higher risk information and the NPTs would gradually build confidence and understanding through ownership, but would also be beneficial for communities who would see more engagement (even if it is reactive, rather than proactive) from their local officers and PCSOs. The clear disadvantage of this however is that NPTs currently have little

capability to deal with such issues, the potential solutions to this will be presented later in this chapter, in relation to whether NPTs *could* be utilised more.

Option three perhaps suggests the most drastic change to what role NPTs currently play within the delivery of Prevent and what role they should play. Discussions with participants in favour of this option leant towards greater integration of role responsibilities in addition to physical integration. It was proposed that NPTs should be allocated the community engagement work that currently sits with PEOs, whilst PEOs take a more supervisory role over how the NPTs do so. In essence, PEOs would be responsible for the coordination of all Prevent related engagement through NPTs, and this engagement would be carried out by NPT officers and PCSOs. Whilst theoretically, this would help Prevent be 'delivered' to a greater number of people, and perhaps in a more coordinated way, the issue of capacity and capability of NPT staff remains, as does the issue of conflicting chains of command. There is a variation of this option which would see PCSOs take on the engagement responsibilities which currently sit with PEOs leaving PCs to continue with the responding to more immediate risks which is also worth consideration. If either variation of this approach was adopted, careful consideration would have to be given to how PEOs interact with NPT Sergeants, who are currently responsible for coordinating the work of the NPTs.

In summary, this research has provided evidence to support the call for increased used of NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy based on a number of rationales. It has considered three key options for what the role of NPTs should be in Prevent; it has concluded that the first option would not sufficiently meet the requirements placed on NPTs through the Prevent duty, and whilst options two and three appear to be possible in theory, changes would need to be made in practice to accommodate. The final section of this chapter, will look at whether or not NPTs *could* be utilised more in the delivery of Prevent, by assessing what would need to be done to implement the two remaining options noted above.

This research has concluded that NPTs should be utilised more in the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, and has proposed two options for increasing their function based on the evidence generated through this research.

1. NPTs should be better informed and trained to support the PEOs in their tasking and engagement.

2. NPTs should tasked with Prevent related engagement in the same way that PEOs currently are.

This section will now look at what changes would have to be made to make these options a practical possibility, and based on this, which would be the most suitable option for the increased use of NPTs in the delivery of Prevent. Although option one would perhaps require less change than the second, and in many ways points to the role that NPTs were intended to play when the Prevent Strategy was first drafted, its implementation would still require some significant adjustments to the current NPT role. The research has repeatedly shown that for NPTs to increase their role in the delivery of Prevent in any way, the police would need to develop their capability and capacity to do so.

Capability

Developing the capability of NPT staff to deliver Prevent is perhaps more straight forward to achieve than increasing capacity in times of shrinking resources. The findings from the interviews has shown that NPT officers do not feel able to contribute more fully to the delivery of Prevent, because they lack the knowledge, understanding, and confidence to engage on such topics.

The research found a mixed picture with regards to the level of Prevent training that NPT participants had received during their service and when participants were asked during interview '*Do you think anything would have to change for NPTs to become more involved in Prevent?*" all of the responses provided, noted the need for additional training. It would be logical to conclude that the Prevent training programme for NPT staff needs to be enhanced to equip them with a base level of understanding of the

Strategy, its purposes, and their role within it. The level of detail that this programme covered would be dependent on which option was chosen; if NPT staff were to take on the current engagement responsibilities of PEOs (option two), the training would need to be more detailed. The findings of the research did point to some challenges in developing the training programme for NPT staff; many NPT participants did not feel that they would have the capacity to attend a training session given their current workloads, furthermore the topic of extremism and Prevent is fast changing therefore training would need to be seen as an ongoing commitment. This suggests that a one-off physical training session would not suffice. Encouragingly, West Yorkshire Police have implemented many changes since the fieldwork for this research completed; the use of online briefings, mobile handheld devices, and virtual forums are all developments which could all be exploited to increase the knowledge and understanding of NPTs. As police forces move into a position where recruitment of new officers and staff is now a possibility again, the option of attachments with Prevent departments could be built into the initial probationary period training for all new officers and staff; similar processes are in place for other areas of policing including safeguarding and custody and have been successful in providing an understanding of different areas of policing which is grounded in practice. In addition to traditional training sessions for all NPT staff, there is also potential for the Prevent teams to develop dynamic briefings for their local NPTs to view on their handheld mobile devices. These could be tailored in a way that each PEO, could provide further information on local issues which would help the NPT staff build up knowledge and understanding of the issues they may be required to engage on. These briefings could also have aide memoir style guidance, links to more detailed information, and the contact information for their local PEOs for advice or general communication. Establishing a system where busy NPT officers could access information and training they require to engage with, and safeguard, vulnerable people at their convenience would undoubtedly help to increase confidence and capability to play a more active role in the delivery of Prevent. For an overview of how technology is being utilised more within policing to good effect see College of Policing, (2013).

Another element of developing capability relates to information sharing between Prevent and NPT teams. Whilst the proposed online briefing system suggested above could go some way to improving this, the research found fundamental issues with how information was shared between Prevent and NPT staff which would need a procedural solution. Currently the information flow for Prevent related tasks, comes from communities (often by NPTs or PEOs), directly into the Counter Terrorism Unit where it is assessed and then allocated accordingly, some of this information will then be passed down to PEOs for action through CCOs (who are the link between CTU and PEOs). Any information stemming from the action will subsequently be fed back into the cycle. Currently, the only way in which this information is passed to NPTs is if the PEOs (or somebody else in CTU) subjectively decides that they should be made aware. Given that much of the intelligence or information concerned is not considered SECRET, there is often no reason why NPTs should not have access to it. The research noted the distinction between PEOs being part of counter terrorism and not part of NPTs in which they are supposedly embedded in, it could be said that this has resulted in a cultural barrier between the sharing of information which 'belongs' to counter terrorism as opposed to the wider policing family. The literature review discussed the need for information to be shared across partner agencies and the challenges in doing so, however this research has since shown that similar barriers also exist within the police service itself. The overview of information sharing and the culture of ownership within the police service by Glomseth, et.al., (2007) appears to be particularly relevant to this issue. If either option one or two was to be successfully implemented, this would have to be overcome, and there would need to be a formalised information sharing process established between CTU and NPTs for information which is appropriate and necessary for NPTs to know in order to allow them to fulfil their role delivering the Prevent Strategy, NPTs would have to be considered a trusted party.

Capacity

Providing NPTs with the capacity to play more of a role in the delivery of Prevent is perhaps a wider challenge. Fundamentally, it would mean adding additional duties onto NPT staff who are already facing

significant demands. One of the most common themes from this research was that NPT officers and PCSOs were struggling to even carry out general community engagement and that their ability to do so was deteriorating over time. Again, West Yorkshire Police have made some significant developments since the fieldwork has completed that may have improved their capacity; for example the mobile handheld devices mean that officers and PCSOs do not have to spend as much time in the police station as they may have previously. There has also been recruitment of new officers in more recent years which has allowed NPTs to rebuild some of their numbers, however the volume of demand placed on the police and NPTs by default has also continued to increase year on year so it is difficult to estimate the current situation. Without fully reviewing the budget, resources and levels of demand placed on the police as an organisation, this research is limited in what judgements it can make regarding increasing the capacity of NPTs, however the need to do so is clear.

What this research can conclude though, is that the increased capacity needed to implement option one appears on first glance to be significantly less than that needed to implement option two. Option one, would require NPTs to factor in community engagement as a whole, part of which would be focused on following up on Prevent related enquiries which come to their attention. Option two would require more time to be solely dedicated to Prevent engagement that currently is carried out by PEOs. That said, it should be noted that option two would essentially mean allocating out the engagement work that is currently carried out by one PEO over an NPT which could be made up of around eight team members, this would theoretically mean that the burden on each NPT individual would be lower. The PEO could also benefit by using this time to produce the dynamic briefings suggested previously and coordinating the sharing of information across the teams. Implementing option two would require more investment into structural changes and training of NPT officers, but could result in a more consistent approach to Prevent related engagement which reaches more members of the community through the increased use of NPTs.

Changing the role of NPTs in the delivery of the Prevent strategy also means changing the role of Prevent teams and the current silo structures. Whilst this does not strictly fall into the categories of developing capability of capacity it is still fundamental to this research. As noted earlier, the purpose of PEOs was to be embedded within NPTs to better integrate the two areas of policing. Whilst this may be a valid aim, the research has shown that the current arrangement means that PEO and NPT level is the first and only point in which community policing and Prevent policing come together at a practical level. The dangers of this in relation to the dual chain of command have been noted earlier in this thesis, however this has greater significance to the delivery of Prevent. To fully embed community policing and Prevent, there must be integration at every level of the policing structure. This chapter has noted that much of the difficulty in increasing the role NPTs in the delivery of Prevent stems from the merging of responsibilities and the addition to workloads. If these conflicts were recognised at an earlier point in demand management of the police, then NPT staff may not then feel pressured to continually neglect their proactive engagement roles in favour of more immediate risks. For example, the call centre deals with calls for service coming into the police which are then allocated out to the relevant team (often NPTs), at the same time CTU are dealing with the demands placed on them and are subsequently allocating these out to the relevant team (often PEOs). If NPTs were to take on an increased level of Prevent tasking, it would need to be managed before it got to an NPT PC or PCSO.

Impact on policy and practice

This research was carried out with the support of West Yorkshire Police, NECTU and the Police and Crime Commissioner, who were keen to better understand Prevent delivery within West Yorkshire Police. As such significant findings from the research were shared with them following the completion of the fieldwork period. A subsequent working group was set up including representatives from West Yorkshire Police, NECTU and the researcher to identify obstacles in the current delivery framework and options for improvement. Particular focus was put on increasing the capability of the NPTs within West Yorkshire Police through training, awareness raising, and standardising practices across the service. A new training

module was established for all new recruits to receive during their initial induction which had an increased emphasis on the link between Prevent and safeguarding. All existing PCs and PCSOs were also expected to receive this training on a three year cycle, and interim online-learning courses were also drafted. West Yorkshire Police also invested in improving and increasing the internal messaging around Prevent and radicalisation through posters, computer screensavers and messages on the force intranet, again the message had a heavy onus on the duty to safeguard vulnerable people against extremism. Perhaps the most significant development was the use of handheld mobile devices for Prevent purposes. West Yorkshire Police had already begun to use handheld mobile devices with frontline staff to improve efficiency, effectiveness and police visibility. The working group identified the potential to use this new technology to share Prevent related information, guidance and briefings with the wider police service. A series of interactive aide-memoirs were drafted for NPT PCs and PCSOs to access through the handheld devices when on duty, and briefing notes could be sent interactively to staff regarding relevant developments in their local area. Whilst this research has not carried out any post-implementation reviews on these developments, it is encouraging to note that West Yorkshire Police were actively trying to overcome some of the challenges noted through this research.

Whilst the impact on the policies and practices of West Yorkshire Police could be implemented relatively easily, this research has also identified issues which would need to be addressed at a national level. The research found a clear disparity between what the role of NPTs were supposed to be in the wording of the Prevent Strategy, compared to what the role was in practice. The literature review and findings from the fieldwork pointed to a lack of consistent guidance to NPTs at both force and national level. Whilst the Prevent Duty guidance could be seen as an attempt to do so, it is a brief document with a broad partnership audience and does little to explain how individual organisations should actually implement Prevent. The interviews and activity reports also pointed to reducing capacities as a reason for this growing disparity. Whilst the national counter terrorism budget has been protected by the government since 2014 (Williams, 2017), the general policing budget has been cut by £2.2b or 22% between 2010

and 2015 (National Audit Office, 2016). This goes against the fundamental principles that the Prevent Strategy was built on – that Prevent should be delivered through community policing. It would appear that although the Government is keen to stress the links and interdependencies of community policing and counter terrorism in its Strategies, it has done little to enable police forces to do this in practice. Whilst this research cannot make conclusions relating to the costs and resources required to effectively deliver the Prevent Strategy, its findings have pointed to the need for clearer guidance on how the police (and partners) should be doing so.

Limitations and further research

This research systematically looked at whether community engagement was important to the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, what the role of NPTs were within this, and whether any changes should or could be made. It was in depth and included a range of complimentary methodologies resulting in a vast data set, however, it naturally had limitations in its breadth and exploration of related issues.

Fundamentally, this research focused on the role that NPTs played within the delivery of the Prevent strategy, however as noted in the literature review, there is also a wider discussion to be had around what the role of the police, as a partner, is. Whilst much of the narrative points to the education sector or Local Authorities being the ideal lead for Prevent, in reality this has fallen to the Police (see English, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Stuart, 2015). Developments have been made since the completion of this fieldwork, around the increased involvement of partners within the delivery of Prevent, in Kirklees for example, the local authority has taken the lead on Channel Panels through a pilot known as Operation Dovetail (Wilkinson, 2016). This pilot was largely deemed a success and steps are in place to see it implemented nationally. Whilst the research findings relating to the role of NPT are still massively relevant to the wider delivery of Prevent in communities, further research into the changing partnership landscape of Prevent and how the police and thus NPTs contribute would be beneficial.

The research, like many case study based investigations was also limited in its breadth; although the justification for using West Yorkshire Police as a basis for this research was methodologically sound, it is important to acknowledge the differences in structures, policies and practices across the 43 police services in England and Wales. Whilst the police service is directed nationally by the Home Office, it is not a national service; each force has its own Police and Crime Commissioner elected by the local public, and its own Chief Constable who fundamentally govern the police force depending on their interpretation of the needs and priorities for public safety in their areas. This can result in very different policing structures and policies which makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the state of policing practices nationally. Whilst there is nothing to suggest that the findings of this research may not still be relevant to other police forces, it would not be safe to assume they apply without further exploration.

As the fieldwork for this research took place in 2014, there have been many developments in policing and counter terrorism since. The focus on current practices relating to community policing and Prevent means that this research is naturally retrospective and thus contributes little to the understanding of future demand in relation to the capacity and capability of police forces to counter extremism going forward. Whilst the findings are still relevant to developing understanding of the issues facing policing in delivering Prevent and options for progression, any changes made to policies or practices to policing need to take into consideration predicted demands facing the police and communities in the future. On a similar note, this research was focused on the traditional concept of community policing and engagement, wherein police officers and PCSOs physical interact with the public in geographical communities. The growth of online platforms and social media brings with it new challenges and opportunities for the police in engaging with the communities that they serve. Goldsmith (2013), and Harms and Wade (2017) provide a useful overview of how the police as a service can adapt in order to engage via cyber space with individuals for general policing purposes, and some such as Tucker (2016); Awan & Blakemore, (2016) have recognised the need for the police and other authorities to counter the growing online rhetoric's of extremists who seek to recruit individuals through online forums. However further research is needed to

bring these two discussions together to better understand how the police and indeed NPTs can prevent extremism through online engagement.

Conclusion

This research has concluded that positive community engagement *is* a significant factor to the successful delivery of the Prevent Strategy and as such community policing principles *should* be at the forefront of preventing extremism. The current role of NPTs within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy was found to be well below the intended level; NPTs have limited capacity to carry out engagement within communities for general policing purposes, and generally lack the confidence, knowledge and information to proactively engage within vulnerable communities on topics relating to extremism. Whilst these challenges could be overcome with increased focus on training, information sharing and re-prioritisation within West Yorkshire Police, it is clear that the reducing resources and increasing demands placed on policing nationally will also need to be addressed. Prevent as a programme has continued to develop at a time where neighbourhood policing has diminished, this has resulted in a growing disparity between the two policing purposes, despite the interdependencies being clear in the original narrative of the Prevent Strategy. This research has shown that West Yorkshire Police have already made good progress in delivering the Prevent strategy with the resources available, and have already begun to implement changes in response to this research and the wider challenges. The intentional incorporation of Prevent into safeguarding has been beneficial not only in reassuring vulnerable communities, but also in changing the perceptions of Prevent amongst NPTs. Prevent is still a counter terrorism strategy, but can also be considered a safeguarding measure to protect those vulnerable to extremism, making it much more relatable to the general duties of an NPT officer or PCSO. Fundamentally, this research concludes that NPTs *should* be utilised more within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy. Both West Yorkshire Police and the Home Office and need to overcome a number of challenges to allow them to do so; increasing the capacity of NPTs perhaps being the most critical.

The threat of extremism is profound and the number of individuals being radicalised within local communities in the UK continues to grow. The police as a service must find a way to identify and safeguard those who are vulnerable to extremism, and this simply cannot be done unless every PC and PCSO is looking. It is the duty of all members of the police service to safeguard vulnerable people against extremism; this responsibility is the same whether they work in a Prevent team or a Neighbourhood Policing Team and so they must all be equipped and allowed to do so.

Appendices

Appendix A - Interview Schedule

Interview details	
Participant	
Interview Reference	
Date / Location	
Consent (Y/N)	
Schedule provided beforehand (Y/N)	

Neighbourhood policing
1.1 In your own words please explain what neighbourhood policing is?   - *What do you think the purpose and aims of neighbourhood policing is?*   - *What do you think the priorities of neighbourhood policing are?*
1.2 As a PC/PCSO what do you feel your role is within Neighbourhood Policing   ***For PEOs, "do you think you have a role within Neighbourhood Policing?"***   - *What role do you feel that NPTs play within communities?*   - *Do you feel your role as a PC/PCSO/PEO is important in maintaining community cohesion?*
1.3 Do you have any thoughts as to how neighbourhood policing in your area could be improved for the benefit of community cohesion?   - *Are there any aspects of how NPTs currently function that help or hinder you and your colleagues in maintaining and improving community relations?*   - *Examples; shift patterns, management of workload, delegation of responsibilities, ward areas etc.*

Prevent
2.1 What is your current understanding and knowledge level of the Prevent Strategy?   - *If participants states no knowledge; provide brief explanation, and ask if they have had experience with this strand of policing?*   - *When did you first become aware of the Prevent Strategy i.e. before joining the police, initial training, since then etc.?*

- *Have you done anything to build up your knowledge of Prevent since being approached to take part, i.e. reading up, speaking to people etc.?*
- *Have you ever been given any training regarding the Prevent Strategy? If so by whom, when, content, did you find it useful etc.?*
- *What is your understanding of the aims of the Prevent Strategy?*
- *Do you know how it is put into practice, how does it operate/ what tactics are employed etc.?*

2.2 **How well do you think Prevent Policing and Neighbourhood Policing are integrated in your area?**

For PCs/PCSOs:

- *Have you ever had any contact or experience of working with the Prevent team?*
- *Who would you go to if you had a Prevent related query or issue?*
- *Do you know how to contact the Prevent team if needed?*
- *Do you know how to ensure that an intelligence report gets to CTU? If so could you briefly outline the steps that you would take?*
- *How well do you think NPTs interact with other departments in general i.e. HMET, Safeguarding, etc. and do you think this is better or worse than with CTU?*

For PEOs:

- *How much contact do you have with your local NPT on a day to day basis?*
- *Do you feel that you are embedded within the NPT?*
- *How often do NPT colleagues contact you, seek out your help, or involve you in their duties?*
- *How well do you think NPTs interact with other departments in general i.e. HMET, Safeguarding, etc. and do you think this is better or worse than with CTU?*

2.3 **For PCs/PCSOs: Are you aware of any ongoing Prevent work in your NPT area? If so what is it?**

- *How were you made aware?*
- *Are you involved in anyway?*

For PEOs; without going into operational detail, could you give quick overview of the sort of ongoing Prevent work in this NPT area?

- *Are the NPT involved in any of this work?*
- *Have they been made aware of the ongoing Prevent work, if so how?*
- *If they haven't been made aware or involved, what are the reasons for this?*

Local community

3.1 How well do you think you know your local community and its needs?

- *What do you think these needs are?*

- *What makes you think that? i.e. briefings, experience, etc.*

3.2 Do you think that there are any parts of your community which are vulnerable to extremism?

- *What type of extremism?*

- *Who / where?*

- *What makes you think this, i.e. briefings, experience, etc.*

3.3 Are you aware of any issues in your NPT area which could contribute to a vulnerability to extremism, i.e. poverty, racial tensions, community tensions, presence of controversial groups?

- *What type of extremism?*

- *Which parts of the community?*

- *What makes you think this? i.e. briefings, experience, etc.*

3.4 Are there any communities in your area which you feel could be vulnerable to extremism but are showing good signs of resilience?

- *If so which community groups?*

- *What are they doing right?*

- *Is this resilience aided by the police in anyway?*

Neighbourhood policing in Prevent

4.1 What you think the role of NPTs should be within preventing violent extremism in your area?

- *Do you think your team is should be involved more or less with the Prevent team and their work?*

- *Do you think that NPT Officers and PCSOs should be dealing with Prevent matters or should this be left to the Prevent team.*

- *Are there any areas of Prevent policing, i.e. engagement, intelligence, interventions etc. which you feel NPTs should be more or less involved in?*

4.2 If NPTs were to become more involved in the delivery of Prevent i.e. through engaging with local community members more, gathering community intelligence; how do you think this would impact neighbourhood policing in your area?

- *Do you think you would be able to cope with such additions to your workload?*

- *Do you think that this would help or hinder the relationship that NPTs have with their communities?*

- *What do you consider the pros and cons of increased NPT involvement in Prevent being?*

4.3 Do you think anything would have to change for NPTs to become more involved in Prevent?

- *i.e. more training, more staff, better information sharing, nothing at all? etc.*

Closing
5.1 Have you got anything else you would like to share?
Thanks and closing

Appendix B – Sanitized example of letter requesting permission to study.

[Name]

PhD Student

Applied Criminology Centre

[Address]

16th of February 2014

Dear *[insert name of representative]*,

My name is [name] and I am a part-time PhD student in Applied Criminology at the University of Huddersfield. I am emailing you to request your assistance with a piece of research I am currently undertaking, whereby I wish to use West Yorkshire Police as a basis.

I am studying, part-time, for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and also work as a Special Constable within West Yorkshire Police. The aim of the PhD is to ascertain the current role that Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) play within the delivery of the Prevent Counter Terrorism Strategy leading on to an assessment of whether or not they could and should be utilised more.

As part of my research I hope to carry out practical field work with four carefully selected NPTs within West Yorkshire Police as case studies. I hope to gather the required information by way of interviews, observations, focus groups and shift reports, and will require the commitment of approximately 30 members of staff from across the force (a more detailed breakdown can be provided). Ultimately the level of commitment will vary depending on the participant's role, however I fully appreciate that this work will not be a key policing priority and have tailored my proposal accordingly. I intend that the key participants (PEOs, NPT Officers and PCSOs) would fill in a shift report at the end of each set, taking no more than 10 minutes, take part in interviews of less than 45 minutes duration, and allow me to observe them on the occasional shift. The involvement of the other participants will be limited to occasional interviews and liaison.

I do not intend to commence my field work until April 2014, however I am currently at the stage where I am able to finalise my plans and would like the input of yourself and the proposed participants if possible. I would be most grateful if we could arrange to meet which would provide the opportunity to discuss my research in more detail and answer any questions that you may have. More importantly I would also like to know whether you as the head representative of West Yorkshire Police would consent to my research going ahead. I understand that you are very busy and would fully appreciate any time that you could give me, please feel free to contact me on any of the mediums provided.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Faithfully,

[name]

Informed Consent Form

This research is being conducted by Lauren Wray as part of a doctoral thesis with the aim of ascertaining what the current role of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) is within the delivery of the Prevent Strategy, and whether this could and should be utilised more.

The research methodology will include interviews, observations, focus groups and Police activity reports, and will focus on four NPTs within West Yorkshire Police which have been identified prior to the field work taking place.

I would like to ask your permission to take part in this field work, which depending on your role or position within the community will vary slightly but may include all or one of the methodologies listed above. It is important to note that although any information provided by you may be made available to the public, it will be sanitised in line with the Government Protective Marking System and will be anonymised so that no participant can be identified.

It is also important that you understand the following:
♦ Your participation in this research is voluntary.
♦ You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.
♦ Your responses are completely confidential—your name or identity will not be connected to anything you say or do during the field work.
♦ Any information that you provide will be sanitized to ensure that no sensitive information will be released to the public.

Please read and answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

CONSENT	
Has the research area been explained to you sufficiently, and do you understand why the research is taking place?	
Have you had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the research?	
Do you understand that your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and can be stopped at any time?	
Do you give permission to be quoted (by use of a pseudonym) within the final publication of this research?	
Do you give permission to take part in tape-recorded interviews?	

If you answered yes to all of the above questions and wish to take part, please sign below to confirm that you fully consent to participation in this research.

Participant:
Signature:.. Date:…………………………………….
Full name (CAPITALS):………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researcher:
Signature:.. Date:…………………………………….
Full name (CAPITALS):………………………………………………………………………………………..

Appendix D – Focus Group Session Plan

Focus Group Session Plan				
Stage	**Purpose**	**Reason**	**Method**	**Risks / Considerations**
Introductions (5 mins)	House keeping	N/A	N/A	Need to clarify researcher identity, purpose of study, and set rules. Important to clarify neutrality and confidentiality. Important to try and set a relaxed and informal atmosphere.
Community Cohesion (15 mins)	To understand how participants feel about the community in which they live.	Vulnerability to extremism can be linked to poor community cohesion. It is important to ascertain how the participants feel about their communities, and whether they feel integrated into the UK.	1. Are you happy with where you live? 2. Do you feel that your community is well integrated in your area? 3. Are there any community tensions in the area? Green/Red flags to indicate responses.	Given the potential language barriers it is important to keep this fairly simple. Yes/No flags with green or red should help this. Also discourages non-participation as each person would be responding to each question.
Police relations (15 mins)	How the group views the police in their area and what level of engagement they have.	This research is ultimately looking at the role of neighbourhood policing in preventing extremism thus it is crucial to understand how they are perceived in vulnerable communities.	Two groups or pairs (depending on the number), and ask groups to write down up with three positive things about the police in their area and 3 negative things. Then ask them to share their answers explaining what they mean, examples etc. Probing questions: - Would you feel comfortable in talking to the police about issues important to you? - Do you think the police treat you with respect?	Before starting this question it may be useful to reiterate that none of answers will be shared with the police and they will remain entirely anonymous. Need to consider the groupings trying to match those who speak good English with those who don't.

Knowledge of Prevent (10 mins)	Establish what the participants know and feel about Prevent.	Important to understand participant's knowledge and prior involvement in Prevent as this will not only set up for later discussion but will also indicate whether Prevent is engaging with their communities from the community perspective.	Ask participants to raise their hands if they have heard of Prevent police. If anyone puts hand up ask if they mind explaining to others what it is. For those who don't, ask if they are aware in more general terms i.e. are they aware of police teams which are focused on community engagement or countering extremism.	Understandably participants may not want to admit having any involvement with the police at all especially not Prevent police, therefore for this section important not to write any answers down on the flip board (although assistant will take notes as to the themes being discussed
Perceptions of extremism (10 mins)	Establish what the participants feel about extremism.	A key element to the research is to engage with communities who are vulnerable to extremism. This will help to gage the level of vulnerability to radicalisation in this community.	Write a number of statements (examples below) on the flip board and ask them to write down how they grade them on level of agreement. i.e. strongly agree / agree / disagree etc. Once this has been done tally the answers on the flip board and open of discussions as to why people feel that way about each.	It is important not to mention the names of groups to avoid somebody inadvertently declaring their support for terrorism. This is perhaps the more controversial section of questioning so must be aware and ready to diffuse any conflict.
Police Role (10 mins)	What do participants think the police could do to prevent extremism within their communities and the UK in general?	The aim of this is to be a concluding question which brings together elements of previous discussions and gets the participants view on what their community needs to see if this correlates with the police / local authority's view	Keep this as an open ended question, and jot down a mind-map on the flip board of answers. Encourage further discussion and try and informally gage level of support for each answer.	Open ended questions need to be managed carefully to ensure all participants the opportunity to explain their opinions more broadly. Also may need to use the probing questions to either encourage conversation or keep it on track.
Closing	Sum up and next steps.	N/A	- Thank everyone for their time and input. - Next steps and feedback. - Provide contact details and support information.	Ensure opportunity for further, more private discussion.

Glossary

Term	Description
Extremism	Extremism can be described as the manifestation of a fanatical, religious, or political view point, which goes beyond typically accepted boundaries. For the purpose of this research it is often used to describe the threat of terrorism and its effect on the individual's mind set or motivations.
Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs)	Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) are a community policing concept and style of policing used widely across the police forces of the UK. Typically an NPT involves small teams of police officers and Police Community Support Officers (usually 10-15 strong) who are dedicated to policing a certain community or area.
Radicalisation	Academics and practitioners generally define radicalisation as a process by which somebody comes to develop extremist beliefs
Terrorism	There are many definitions of terrorism; HM Government defines terrorism as "*any act which causes harm, intending to influence the government, intimidate the public or to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.*" The Oxford Dictionary defines terrorism as "*The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.*"
The Prevent Strategy	The Prevent strategy is one strand of the CONTEST Strategy which is the UK Government's counter terrorism strategy. The Prevent Strategy aims to stop people being drawn into extremism.
Police Constable (PC)	A Police Constable (PC) is a police officer of constable rank. The PC participants in this research are police officers who work on the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs).
Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)	Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) work with police officers on Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and share some, but not all of their powers.
Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs)	Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs) are police officers typically of PC rank who are specially trained as Prevent Officers. They are embedded and work with NPTs, but are also tasked on Prevent matters by their senior within their local counter terrorism unit.

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