



Proposal to add Channel Duty to Shropshire Council's Constitution

Background

"Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – Local Panels (also known as "Channel Panels")

Under Section 36 of the 2015 Act the Council must set up a Panel (that meets monthly) for its area with the functions of:

- (1) assessing the extent to which individuals (as identified on reasonable grounds by the chief constable or the local authority) are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and
- (2) amongst other things, preparing a plan in respect of identified individuals who the panel considers should be offered support for the purpose of reducing their vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism;

Where a panel determines that support should not be given to an individual under a support plan, the panel must consider whether the individual ought to be referred to a provider of any health or social care services.

The members of a panel must include the Council (who will chair the Panel) and the chief officer of police. In line with the Channel Duty guidance, as a minimum for Shropshire, the core membership will consist of the following:

- Local Authority Channel chair; and
- Channel Case Officer
- An experienced Mental Health Practitioner from the Midland Partnership NHS Foundation Trust as per NHS England's recommendation in "Guidance for mental health services in exercising duties to safeguard people from the risk of radicalisation."
- West Mercia Police

Other standing members of the panel include:

- Shropshire CCG Adults/and or Children's Safeguarding Lead Officer
- Shropshire Council representative from Adult Services
- Shropshire Council representative from Children's Services
- Shropshire Council Early Years Education
- Shropshire Council School Education
- Shropshire Council Further Education
- Youth Offending Team



Each of those organisations must appoint a person to represent them on the panel; and the representative must be a person whom the organisation concerned considers to have the required skills and experience.

If a panel cannot reach a unanimous decision on a question arising before it, the question must be decided according to the opinion of the majority of the panel, or if there is no majority opinion, by the chair.”

The Local Authority Channel Panel Chair is responsible for:

- having oversight of all Channel cases in their area
- ensuring that the appropriate representatives are invited to each meeting as panel members
- establishing effective relationships across partners of the panel to ensure effective cooperation over information sharing, attendance at panel meetings and delivery of support
- establishing the appropriate support plan for identified individuals, which takes account of wider family context and needs, by using the expertise of the panel
- ensuring that vulnerabilities of persons at risk of being drawn into terrorism are assessed by the panel and accurately reflected in Channel minutes
- ensuring an effective support plan is put in place and that consent is sought from the individual (or their representative) before support is accessed
- ensuring the most appropriate panel member is tasked to update individuals/ families on progress where appropriate
- ensuring individuals and/or organisations on the panel carry out their elements of the support plan, holding partners to account where necessary through proactive management of actions, enquiries and interventions
- ensuring all decisions and the rationale for decisions are reflected within the Channel panel minutes
- ensuring appropriate information exchange occurs where individuals transfer between services
- ensuring the panel functions effectively to address identified vulnerabilities
- actively addressing or escalating issues of non-engagement within partner organisations or concerns relating to local Channel form or function through local governance arrangements where needed
- applying professional judgement and providing the casting vote on the adoption of cases where there is no consensus among panel members
- highlighting and requesting that identified gaps in local service provisions are considered by commissioners
- ensuring information sharing arrangements are in place for the panel in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), in partnership with local information governance and legal teams



- liaising with other local authority teams (such as child and adult protection) if appropriate, to ensure that Channel support is aligned and coordinated with other safeguarding processes

In Shropshire, the strategic lead for this now sits with the Exploitation Group as part of Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership.

As a designated statutory duty, the requirements of Channel should be reflected in relevant local policy, guidance and the local authority's constitution. (Channel Duty Guidance, page 4 paragraph 3).