

Oppose PREVENT

Proposer:

Rania Salim

Secunder:

Sayed Azam

Ruqaiyah Javaid

Nazia Bharde (VP Activities and Development)

This Union notes:

1. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015 placed a statutory requirement on 'specified authorities' – including universities and colleges – to 'Prevent people being drawn into terrorism', and therefore to implement the 'Prevent' strategy – this is known as the 'Prevent duty'.
2. According to the Prevent Strategy, potential indicators of "radicalism" or "extremism" include:
 - a. "A desire for political, social or moral change"
 - b. "Mental health issues."
 - c. "Being at a transitional time of life."
3. The Prevent strategy, as part of the government's 'counter-extremism' agenda, has been used to create a vast surveillance system to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Muslims and Black people.
4. Under the Prevent duty, student groups have been subject to conditions making it harder to host events or organise politically - including physical monitoring of events.
5. The government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are elastic, and open to abuse for political ends
6. That the National Union of Students (NUS), University and College Union (UCU) and dozens of student unions have both passed motions opposing the Act and Prevent, including City SU.
7. In January 2019 the government announced that they would be conducting an 'Independent Review' of Prevent.
8. The terms of this review are likely to be narrow, and focused mostly on building support for Prevent rather than deal with the root issues with Prevent or call for its scrapping.

This Union Believes:

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.
3. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance.

4. The implementation of the Prevent strategy on campus has served to securitise our University, and narrow the space to be able to organise.
5. That as a Charity, we as a Union are not legally bound by the Prevent duty and should seek to boycott it as far as legally possible.

This Union Resolves:

1. To mandate the Officers of this Union to not engage with, or implement any Prevent duty measures to which they are not legally bound, and to boycott it as far as legally possible. This includes not participating in the reporting on the activities of student societies to the Prevent department, implementing mitigating measures on events as indicated under the Prevent guidance and refusing to sit on the University's Prevent working group.
2. To release a statement expressing our opposition to Prevent and the Prevent duty for being racist and a threat to civil liberties.
3. To facilitate meetings between campus trade unions such as the UCU and Unison on combating the Prevent duty and its implementation on campus, and working towards minimum compliance of the duty by staff.
4. To work with the motion proposers to educate students on the dangers of Prevent strategy by supporting the anti-Prevent activism of students and student societies through funding resources and events.
5. To lobby the University to publicise how they are implementing the Prevent duty and other similar initiatives and apply this to the SU's own activities under Prevent.
This involves:
 - Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the University and Students' Union
 - This includes access to materials used to train staff and students
 - Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.
6. SU to refuse funding from Prevent or provided through counter-extremism programmes more broadly.
7. In the upcoming Independent Review of Prevent, the SU should lobby to ensure that the abolition of Prevent is an option for the outcome, and push for this out of the review.
8. In the event of attempts to broaden the outreach of Prevent on campus, including but not limited to, monitoring of student activity in the Prayer and Multi Faith room through card swiping and/or cameras, changes to IT usage policies including monitoring/blocking of websites, the SU would support students' actions to push back against this.