

# The Role of Further Education Providers in Promoting Community Cohesion, Fostering Shared Values and Preventing Violent Extremism

Consultation Document



Department for  
**Innovation,  
Universities &  
Skills**

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## Foreword

In his speech on liberty last year, Gordon Brown said “to each generation falls the task of expanding the idea of British liberty and to each generation also the task of rediscovering liberty’s central importance as a founding value of our country and its animating force.” He called on the Secretary of State, John Denham, and me as Minister, to lead a debate on how we maintain academic freedom whilst ensuring that extremists can never stifle debate or impose their views. For the first time we are taking that debate to Further Education (FE).

Our central challenge is to strengthen the resilience of communities against forces that would tear them apart, enabling them to resist extremist influence and root out terrorism, at the same time as preserving the freedom we value so much and that defines our traditions. We are issuing this consultation document so that those involved in FE can consider how they might meet this challenge.

Colleges can play a key role to support learners to engage with and benefit from shared values. Our shared values which bind communities together belong to everyone in Britain; they are not possessed by any one race, faith/belief or nationality. Within FE they can be experienced, not taught, and built over time by people sharing ideas, tolerating others’ views and having constructive disagreement.

Many young people and adults benefit from further education and are able to play more of a leadership role in their families, workplace and communities as a result. Because of this, it is absolutely critical that FE Institutions embody these values of openness, free debate and tolerance and promote them through the way they operate.

By promoting this culture, we will provide an environment with the trust and respect in which communities can deal more productively and collaboratively with any conflict arising from differences of culture, ideology or faith. There is a particular opportunity for FE Institutions because they are often at the heart of the communities they serve.

The Government judges the main terrorist threat to the UK at this time to be from Al-Qa’ida influenced terrorism. It is for this reason that in this guidance, we specifically focus in some areas on this form of violent extremism and in other areas, all forms of violent extremism. We recognise that colleges face similarly complex issues with regard to the activities of the extreme far right, animal rights activists, anti-semitism, Islamophobia as well as wider issues of race, faith, sexual orientation and gender intolerance. These problems, however, do not present the same scale of threat as AQ-influenced violence.

We should never overstate the menace we face from violent extremism. But the government believes there is a real threat, and that we must take responsibility for protecting people. Freedom belongs to people, not governments. There is no freedom at all if people face disruption and violence in their daily lives.

FE Institutions have a responsibility to protect all their students and staff from those who seek to exploit the freedom provided by Further Education in order to promote violence or incite hatred, intimidate or bully others. They also have a responsibility to support their most vulnerable students.

We welcome the work many colleges are already doing and want to develop resources for all that draw on this existing good practice.

This consultation is aimed to support FE Institutions in their work to develop community cohesion and prepare to challenge the promotion of violent extremism. It seeks to help sensitise staff to the issues and encourage them to think about how Further Education communities can become more vigilant and work with staff and students/learners to take responsible preventative action to tackle violent extremism and recruitment to violent extremist groups.

I know that this agenda presents new challenges but we do have a wealth of experience on which to build. I am particularly grateful to those of you who shared that experience in the writing of this document and I want to encourage you to respond to this consultation. I am committed to working with you to enable Further Education to continue its positive response to meet the continuing challenge.



**Bill Rammell MP**  
**Minister of State, Lifelong Learning,**  
**Further and Higher Education**

Colleges have a responsibility to work with their local community partners to contribute to the cohesion of their local area, and we know that many take this very seriously and that there is lots of good practice in place. We have worked with Ministers to prepare this document, which explores an important new dimension to this work which we feel it is important for all those in a leadership position within a college to consider.

This is a consultation document and, as such, represents the start of a process of reaching an understanding of the best way to address the issues this document raises. We hope you will all respond to the opportunity to feed in your views, whether electronically or through attending one of the workshops we will be organising around the country.

I am pleased that many have already contributed their thoughts in the drafting of this document and I am very grateful to you for giving your time to do this.



**Sue Dutton**  
**Acting Chief Executive,**  
**Association of Colleges**

# 1. Introduction

We want our colleges to be integrated communities where all staff and students/learners are safe and secure and where free and open debate can take place. A valued aspect of the right to freedom of expression in the UK is that individuals have the right to criticise, disagree and campaign against the government on any issue of foreign or domestic policy they choose. It can be entirely legitimate to hold a view that is radical or extreme on the political spectrum. However, it becomes unacceptable and indeed is a criminal activity when individuals develop extremist views that lead them to espouse, advocate or even undertake or facilitate violent acts. Institutions must not tolerate those who incite hatred so as to deliberately undermine good campus and community relations, using their extremist viewpoint as a justification for their actions.

The world class FE college actively promotes cohesion within the student/learner body. The best colleges recognise that successful educational outcomes are closely linked to creating a climate of mutual respect and support with clear boundaries on unacceptable behaviour. Many colleges understand their position within the local area as a key gateway for young people and adults to go through, with many returning to positions of responsibility within the community following training – this brings considerable responsibility to the college be a key “place shaper” for its area.

This consultation highlights the crucial importance of colleges working with students/learners of all backgrounds to build community cohesion and good race relations and to prevent the segregation of students. It aims to share information and experiences in order to enable college authorities to develop a more consistent and effective approach across the sector. In particular, it considers recommendations that may be necessary to ensure good relations and a safe environment in colleges, thus ensuring that all staff and students/learners can work, study and live without fear of intimidation, harassment, bullying and threatening or violent behaviour.

Violent extremists frequently target their radicalisation efforts at young people in a number of settings within the wider community and in specific settings such as prison, youth clubs, schools, universities and Further Education colleges. The efforts of colleges to foster an environment where hatred and intolerance cannot prosper is helping to make it more difficult for violent extremists to successfully spread their message.

This document is relevant to all organisations providing Further Education in a dedicated learning environment and the term “college” is used to refer to these throughout. We are also, therefore, interested in providers offering training within a workplace setting, to consider how the issues we explore relate to their work.

The diversity of such settings is such that we have used the term “student/learner” to refer to those benefiting and “learner representative forum” to refer to student unions, parliaments, councils and other ways in which the college engages with the students/learners as a group.

This document is being sent directly to Principals and Chief Executives and we expect college management, including Governing bodies, to consult with their staff, the learner representative forums and students/learners as appropriate in designing and implementing policies and procedures in response. We would expect Further Education Institutions to consult widely and use collective bargaining when implementing this or any other guidance issued to them by the Department or the LSC.

## 2. Cohesion in Further Education: Key Themes and Objectives

Colleges play an invaluable role in promoting community cohesion and integration, providing settings where young people and adults from every ethnic, faith, belief and social group can come together.

In 2005 Ofsted found that almost all colleges had successfully created environments where students/learners of diverse heritage felt welcome and safe with effective procedures and strategies to tackle racism and harassment. Cultural awareness was being raised in most colleges, but at the same time the promotion of good race relations through the curriculum was patchy. Many colleges are very active in the promotion of community cohesion and examples are included in the consultation to reflect this.

This section sets out the five key objectives where colleges have a clear responsibility to help foster a cohesive society. Section 3 offers some practical steps in relation to each of these objectives and issues which they should consider. Section 4 sets out the differentiated approach to planning we believe is needed to allow for the very different circumstances faced by colleges. Section 5 reviews the resources available to support this work. Section 6 discusses how this work relates to inspection and the Framework for Excellence and addresses the experiences in work-based training. Section 7 describes the consultation process. Annexes provide further scenarios and responses as well as more detailed information on, for example, the legislative framework.

### Key Objectives

1. To promote and reinforce shared values; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen to and support mainstream voices.
2. To break down segregation amongst different student/learner communities including by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding and to engage all students/learners in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society.
3. To ensure student/learner safety and colleges that are free from bullying, harassment and intimidation.
4. To provide support for students/learners who may be at risk and appropriate sources of advice and guidance.
5. To ensure that students/learners and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent extremism.

### 3. Practical Advice on Delivering the Key Objectives

The core business of colleges is to enable their students/learners to achieve the best results they can within their chosen field of study. Creating a culture with a focus on achievement and positive expectation of reward will be invaluable in fulfilling a substantial role within the wider community in building community capacity and self-confidence and in engaging the student/learner body in resisting efforts to destabilise the community or introduce violence.

Colleges know the crucial importance of monitoring performance so that particular attention and support can be made available where there is underperformance. An emphasis on engaging with the student/learner voice and establishing opportunities to influence the quality of provision will be crucial.

The five objectives are wide ranging and actions to achieve them need to draw together our aims of promoting community cohesion, fostering shared values and preventing violent extremism. Colleges can emphasise much of this within their existing community cohesion programmes. However, those facing particular threats from violent extremists would be advised to develop separate “preventing violent extremism” plans.

Colleges may face challenges in gathering a robust body of evidence about the scale and nature of the risks and in establishing effective approaches for countering them. To help do this, each of our key objectives suggests actions for colleges to consider.

#### **1. To promote and reinforce shared values; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen to and support mainstream voices**

One of the most powerful building blocks for creating cohesive communities is to find common ground between different groups and recognise shared values.

Many recent commentators agree that young people need the opportunity to discuss the issues relating to integration and cohesion. The Commission for Integration and Cohesion’s report and Sir Keith Ajegbo’s Curriculum Review of Diversity and Citizenship both stress the importance of citizenship education for future national stability. The Ajegbo report states “It is important not to marginalise or silence voices if we aim for an inclusive, democratic and participative citizenry....We believe that, in order for people to explore how we live together in the UK today and to debate the values we share, it is important they consider issues that have shaped the development of UK society.”

Colleges should foster shared values which prize openness, respect, tolerance and the importance of debate. Promoting and discussing these shared values can help individuals develop their own sense of identity and establish their place in society. Learners who are able to engage in vigorous debate will develop the skills to challenge the ideas of those who espouse violent extremism and develop the ability to resist the superficial attractions of lifestyles involving illegal activities – whether the membership of violent gangs or of groups promoting separatist agendas or racial hatred.

Colleges should work closely with student/learner groups and societies to make sure there are clear policies on their duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students, employees and visiting speakers (Section 43 of the Education Act 1986).

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## **Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education:**

The Grimsby Institute launched its new student forum on the 8th February '06. The idea behind the forum is to give students a voice regarding all issues at the Institute and, as well as having input into the day to day activities at the Institute, it gives them an insight into any future plans and developments. The Institute believes that the forum gives the students the opportunity to have their say on all aspects of student life and address issues, giving them ownership of their chosen place of study, and strengthening links with academic and support staff at the Institute.

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It is important that staff and students/learners from all groups of society feel able to play a full part in college life and not feel intimidated, marginalised or ignored. Governing bodies, staff, student/learner societies and political and faith societies all have a role in this regard. Colleges will want to consider how students/learners are encouraged to engage in debate and how they ensure the views of all staff and students/learners – not just the most vocal – can be encouraged and heard. This

may include providing and publicising clear channels and forums whereby those who wish to challenge extremist views are given the opportunity and the support to do so.

Colleges should encourage students/learners to play an active role in their local communities which will enrich their whole college and educational experience and develop skills and knowledge that will be useful in their future careers. This might include encouraging participation in the democratic process either within the college in student/learner elections or the local political scene or on a national level. Encouraging and facilitating volunteering opportunities will empower students/learners and enable them to develop new skills and valuable opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds and cultures.

Such activities led by the college or learners themselves support the development of active, contributing citizens within the local and national community and make it much harder for those who espouse violent extremism to gain a foothold.

### Issues to consider

- Is there a clearly publicised, easily available Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech which outlines the college's policies and procedures?
- Are you working with the learner representative forum and societies to create and publicise opportunities for students/learners to voice their opinions and engage actively in debate?
- Are you working with the learner representative forum to promote participation in the democratic process and to facilitate opportunities to get involved in the community?
- Do you have regular dialogue with learner representative forums, multi-faith student support staff and college chaplains and staff student/learner liaison officers? Are you aware that LLUK is developing standards for staff-student liaison officers which will strengthen this role and support your dialogue?

## **2. To break down segregation amongst different student/learner communities including by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding and to engage all students/learners in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society**

Colleges must make sure there is equality of opportunity for all and increase participation and promote interaction between different groups. Colleges will recognise that breaking down segregation that can take place will help learners benefit from the full college experience. It will also enable the students/learners who leave to play a more positive role within their communities through the mutual respect and understanding that they develop of the different communities that make up the local population.

Should segregated communities develop within a college, attitudes and beliefs may be reinforced so that there is little opportunity for dissent, free-thinking or the dilution of commonly held preconceptions about issues within the segregated community or wider communities. Segregated communities may steadily drift away from each other increasingly regarding the codes of behaviour, loyalty and respect that wider society take for granted as behaviour that no longer applies to them. What can then follow is division and conflict.

Attempts at encouraging integration can be presented by those who prefer segregation as being designed to destroy close community ties, breaking up

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**Barking College:** The College has adopted the approach of using high profile racial incidents to provide a forum for discussion for their students supported by keynote speakers. To this end the parents of Stephen Lawrence and a close relative of the young man murdered in a racial attack in Liverpool have both met groups of students at the College. This has proved very useful in raising awareness amongst students of the issues involved.

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groups. This is a particularly difficult and sensitive issue with responsibilities on both sides. Colleges should not feel obliged to meet every demand from a faith/belief or cultural group but should encourage an open and rational debate about what is reasonable and should communicate clearly what has been decided and why. Students/learners need to recognise that it is not reasonable to expect

colleges to provide facilities in a way that an institution whose chief purpose was religious would do.

Colleges should take reasonable steps to set up inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and interaction, supporting activities such as volunteering or arts and sports which cross the faith/belief and cultural boundaries. The links that many colleges have with local community groups can be valuable in promoting shared values and challenging intolerance and discrimination. They also offer the potential for learners to support, mentor and encourage local young people to aspire to further education.

Activities in and with communities can take many forms including the provision of 'common ground' – spaces where differences in students/learners' background, culture, faith and belief can be safely and constructively explored – and if necessary, conflicts resolved – as well as colleges acting the 'honest broker' between groups who hold different world views and value systems.

Faith groups have significant social roles to play in helping promote cohesion and the Government is actively working with faith communities to build their capacity to take practical steps to reject violent extremism and feel a welcome part of wider British society. Colleges should take reasonable steps to explore opportunities for staff and students/learners to engage in relevant activities including those that will develop the potential leadership role of young men and women from different faiths, beliefs and cultures.

#### Issues to consider

- Have you reviewed your existing policies and procedures to take account of recent relevant legislation set out in **Annex C** and available guidance and good practice?
- Do your policies specifically address the need to balance the interests of particular cultural or faith/belief groups with those of the wider college community?
- Are these policies clearly communicated to staff, students/learners and potential students?

### **3. To ensure student/learner safety and colleges that are free from bullying, harassment and intimidation**

All students/learners and staff have the right to be safe and free from threats, other intimidation, harassment or violence during their time at college.

Colleges must ensure a safe environment where people from different backgrounds or with different lifestyles and beliefs are tolerant and respectful of each other. Discrimination, intolerance and violence have no place within the college.

Colleges should consider with their student/learner societies whether they should establish a student/learner charter outlining what behaviour is allowed within the college community and what is not, setting out zero tolerance to intimidation, bullying, harassment, discrimination, racial hatred or incitement to racial hatred or any forms of incitement to violence or violence itself.

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#### **Blackburn College:**

The College was central to a campaign within the local area developing a "Charter of Belonging". The College's basic skills unit reduced this to a simple five point "mini" charter which was easily understandable and this "pledge" formed the heart of the campaign. Blackburn College students/learners have also initiated regular debates on issues including faith, safety, and bullying as part of a Student Voice scheme.

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#### **Issues to consider**

- Are your staff and students/learners aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding discrimination, harassment, intimidation, equality and freedom of speech?
- Do you have a clear and easily accessible Equal Opportunities Policy and clear procedures for dealing with complaints and incidents?
- Are staff and students/learners clearly signposted to sources of help in the college, learner representative forum and local police?
- Do you have an institutional standard of acceptable behaviour setting out zero tolerance to intimidation, bullying, harassment, discrimination, racial hatred or incitement to racial hatred or any forms of incitement to violence or violence itself?

#### **4. To provide support for students/learners who may be at risk and appropriate sources of advice and guidance**

Colleges should have in place a broad range of measures to enable students/learners with concerns, anxieties or fears, including about violent extremism, to voice them and find support. In particular, colleges should work closely with students' unions and student/learner societies to publicise appropriate contacts with whom learners with any concerns about violent extremism can consult in confidence. These could include: confidential help-lines; faith advisers; personal tutors specialising in certain areas who would be willing to speak to students/learners with questions; student/learner welfare groups; student/learner liaison officers.

Colleges should review the nature of the multi-faith support provided to students/learners to ensure it reflects all faith communities represented in the student/learner community as far as reasonably possible. Making links with the local faith leaders and other community groups is also important as they may have the expertise to play a positive role in supporting and protecting vulnerable young people, in particular where there is no multi-faith chaplaincy within the college.

Colleges should also make sure that staff have access to appropriate training materials to enable them to provide the correct support to students.

Communities and Local Government (CLG) is leading on the development of a framework of minimum standards for organisations engaging Muslim faith leaders in public service that will make them more effective in supporting students/learners and addressing any arising issues relating to violent extremism in colleges. CLG and DIUS will be working with FE providers to consider what this means in practice for recruiting Muslim chaplains and training individuals already carrying out this function. CLG and DIUS have also commissioned the National Institute for Adult Continuous Education (NIACE) to develop a CPD package for faith leaders in Community Leadership which will have useful material for Muslim chaplains and others. Colleges should ensure they draw on this standard and material in recruiting and training staff into these positions.

##### **Issues to consider**

- Are your staff appropriately trained to deal with concerns from students/learners?
- Are staff and students/learners clearly signposted to sources of help in the college, learner representative forum and local police?
- Are the multi-faith student/learner support services that are available in your college clearly publicised and easily accessible?

## **5. To ensure that students/learners and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent extremism**

Colleges and student/learner leaders have an important role in:

- educating their students/learners about how violent extremist groups operate and recruit;
- who they target; and
- how the college, the student/learner welfare teams and law enforcement agencies can support anyone who feels targeted or vulnerable, or is the subject of intolerance, discrimination, hate crime or intimidation.

**Annexes B and C** offer initial briefing on violent extremism and recruitment processes and specific information on the legislative framework.

It is important that colleges should have robust policies in place:

- To tackle any prejudice or intolerance against students/learners that may be sparked by the activities of Al-Qa'ida influenced or other violent extremists. Colleges will be a key partner in the work that local authorities are undertaking to build resilience to violent extremism. Much of this work will be focused on young people and will look to build understanding, leadership and engagement.
- On external speakers: A college should take reasonable steps to ensure that an external speaker is not likely to promote or advocate violent extremism and that the college is able to make sure that what is being said falls within the law. Colleges should consider sharing information with each other and with Universities on issues such as speakers of concern or those who are involved in any form of extremist activity leading to or promoting violence.
- To allow them to assess what literature and material may be being held or distributed in the college. Students/learners and staff should be able to research violent extremism and the causes of it as appropriate as part of their studies. However, the law sets boundaries surrounding publications that may promote or incite violence. Legal advice should be sought if there are concerns that the content of a publication may break the law.

As part of their risk management plans, colleges should consider having emergency plans in place to respond to an event or incident. See section 4 on how such plans can be developed. They should publish clear policies on acceptable use of college facilities including meeting rooms, internet, library books etc.

#### **Issues to consider**

- Do you have clearly set out policies on use of external speakers?
- Do you have recently reviewed and clearly set out policies on the use of college premises by outside bodies?
- Do you have mechanisms to ensure that you could act appropriately if college premises were being used for unlawful activity or speech?
- Do you have clear policies on acceptable use of college facilities including meeting rooms, internet, library books etc.?
- Do you have in place the methods to be able to translate any publications or literature being held or distributed in the college into English?

## 4. A Differentiated Approach Based on Risk Assessment

Given the diversity of circumstances faced by colleges, we believe a differentiated approach is needed so that colleges can develop plans appropriate to their circumstances. To do this, a risk assessment will be needed.

Colleges will be familiar with developing risk assessments for their business but some may find new challenges to be faced to allow them to consider in full the issues discussed in this consultation. We want to support colleges to build capacity and will commission the QIA to lead on this.

### Question 1:

Which aspects of assessing and managing risks in this area are most challenging?



### Question 2:

What form of support for this will be most valuable?



The risk assessment will show a college which of three states it is in at any one time and enable it to develop its plans accordingly.

**Level 1: Universal** – A set of minimum activities that should be adopted by all colleges. Colleges would want to provide activities which positively embrace community cohesion ideals. Colleges should assess their level of vulnerability to threats to student/learner safety and from violent extremist groups. This will enable them to provide reassurance to current and potential students/learners about the learning environment, as well as determining whether they need to build in additional measures.

**Level 2: At Risk** – Those colleges which identify particular risks or threats should take action with the aim of avoiding these becoming incidents. For example, a college might identify particular areas of vulnerability affecting some or all sections of the student/learner community as a result of information from the police or other community partners or their own vigilance. In practice this is likely to necessitate a greater level of engagement with community partners, particularly the police and local faith leaders.

**Level 3: Incident Management** – Colleges will already have plans for dealing with a variety of emergency situations. Scenarios where an individual is identified by the police as a violent extremist or where someone is arrested under terrorism legislation should be included in these. This should include how the college staff will work with the relevant authorities and measures to limit the damage to individuals and the wider community.

## 5. Resources to Support Action

We intend to commission the QIA to bring together case studies of good practice and practical steps colleges can take, building on what we have been offered as part of the consultation in developing this document. In this section we review the resources already available as a basis for consulting on what more is needed.

We deal in turn with:

- A: Leadership and Staff
- B: Students/Learners
- C: Partnership Working

### **A1: Leadership and Staff: leadership, management and policies**

College leadership has a key role in establishing a shared vision, mission and values and a sense of belonging. These must be backed up with policies, practice and culture that will result in this area being given sufficient priority and staff and students/learners being clear about what is expected of them. Given the particularly controversial and sensitive nature of some aspects of this work, effective leadership and management combined with clear boundaries and consistency will be crucial in gaining commitment to both the promotion of community cohesion and the safeguarding dimensions. In developing policies in this area it will be important for colleges to consult with the local police force (**Annex D** provides guidance on engagement with the police).

Available resources include:

- *Managing Conflicting Rights and Issues of Discrimination: promoting good relationships within the college community* (AoC and QIA: January 2007) provides guidance on how to deal with situations where different groups have conflicting rights. This can be accessed at: <http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=equalityanddiversityresources>
- *Making Space for Faith: Values Beliefs and Faiths in the Learning and Skills Sector* (NEAFE and CEL: July 2007) provides a useful basis for thinking through issues around support for spiritual needs of students. This can be accessed at: <http://www.fbfe.org.uk/documents/>
- FBFE provides multi-faith consultancy and support (e.g. undertaking faith audits, organising conflict resolution workshops) to colleges bringing together coalitions of interest and specialists from the voluntary and charitable sector e.g. Anne Frank Trust, Helena Kennedy Foundation and Citizenship Foundation.
- Further support in this area is available from the Lokahi Foundation.
- *Safe to Learn* (DCSF) is guidance on tackling bullying in educational institutions. This can be accessed at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying>

- Communities and Local Government (CLG) is developing a tool to enable organisations consider the community cohesion impacts that might arise from new policies or initiatives.
- CLG and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) recently launched a web portal and Community of Practice on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) to support local level practitioners working on the PVE agenda. Through the Community of Practice, practitioners are able to access documents, exchange ideas through discussion forums and share best practice. The introductory web page can be accessed at: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=7146720>. Practitioners will need to register in order to access the Community of Practice. This can be accessed at: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/login.do>
- The AOC London Region is gathering baseline data from London colleges on how they work with their communities to deal with the issues such as gun and knife crime as a forerunner to producing a check-list of ideas and actions for colleges and with the view to doing more detailed development work next year.
- The LSC new college design website includes guidance on college security and creating a safe physical environment. This can be accessed at: <http://designguidance.lsc.gov.uk/design/designissues/summary.htm>
- *Developing a Learner Involvement Strategy* (LSC February 2007) has guidance on learner involvement. This can be accessed at: <http://www.readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-developingalearnerinvolvementstrategy-pu-feb2007.pdf>
- Ofsted's subject and thematic surveys programme inform national policy direction in the sector on community cohesion and are expected to include a survey focused on its role in relation to community cohesion during 2008.
- Ofsted's report on Race Equality in Further Education provides pointers to good practice in supporting equality and diversity in the delivery of FE services.

## **A2: Leadership and Staff: engaging and building the capacity of staff**

Everyone working in colleges can play their part. Alongside key roles for senior managers, governors and teaching staff, other important roles to consider will include:

- Staff student/learner liaison officers, any staff supporting the learner representative forum and any staff focused on learner involvement/voice;
- Multi-faith student/learner support teams and chaplains – these people can have a key role in supporting students/learners in thinking through faith-related issues and in promoting inter-faith dialogue and understanding;
- Security and site staff;

- Other support staff – for example technical staff may be aware of the websites students/learners are accessing and those managing extra-curricular activities may have to deal with tensions between groups.

Teachers in the college (and others dealing with groups of students/learners and focusing on meeting student/learner needs) may benefit from training in conflict resolution and in sensitivity to issues of diversity, particularly faith. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion recommended that educational institutions should consider buying in support or training on conflict resolution and mediation to ensure they are able to manage the consequences of increased dialogue.

Available resources include:

- The first FE Workforce Strategy was launched in January 2008 and will be backed up by a three year Strategy Implementation Plan. Equality and diversity of the workforce is a key theme underpinning the document. Priority 4 of the Strategy is focused on 'ensuring equality and diversity is at the heart of strategy, policy making, planning and training'.
- Lifelong Learning UK's standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector require all teacher training programmes to equip teachers to promote equality and inclusive learning and engage with diversity.
- CEL runs a range of initiatives contributing to providing staff with opportunities to develop greater awareness of other nations and cultures -

covering faith, international exchange opportunities and emphasising the importance of communities, social justice and social harmony in sustainable development.

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## Oldham 6th Form College:

The College has created a specific society as a forum for open discussion. This operates in a structured way and allows for the discussion of potentially difficult issues in a very "up front" way. They have found the Citizenship agenda has had a significant impact in promoting this culture of openness and belonging. This willingness to face up to and deal with sensitive topics has received very positive feedback from both students/learners and their parents. This open approach reaps rewards outside the College as students/learners who very much feel members of the College community are having a calming influence on situations of potential conflict in the wider community.

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- National Council for Faiths and Beliefs in FE (FBFE – formerly NEAFE) training material for new chaplains/multi-faith support workers and a good practice guide for existing ones will be available from early 2008 from <http://www.fbfe.org.uk/documents/>
- QIA has developed a range of materials and resources that relate to this area of college work and will bring these together early in 2008 into a coherent package of support via its Excellence Gateway website.

## **B1: Student/Learners: engaging and building the capacity of students/learners**

The student/learner body has a key role both as recipients of policies and activities to promote community cohesion, foster shared values and prevent violent extremism, and as participants in planning and delivering such activities. It will be important to review measures to build the capacity of the student/learner body so that it can effectively engage in this.

Available resources include:

- To encourage learners to take more responsibility for their learning QIA have developed training and support materials for learners who are course representatives to help them become more effective in representing the views and interests of FE learners. This toolkit is available on the QIA Excellence Gateway.
- The British Council has developed “Safety First”, a personal safety guide for international students/learners coming to study in Britain.
- DIUS is working with the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) to develop audio-visual material and other resources countering Al-Qa’ida influenced violent extremist ideology that could be made available to colleges.
- DIUS will work with key national student/learner organisations with the aim of:
  - engaging them in raising awareness of risks including from violent extremism, and how to protect themselves;
  - understanding and engaging with colleges to ensure that student/learner organisations are performing a leadership role and have opportunities to debate issues, share different perspectives and build mutual respect and understanding; and
  - developing guidance and materials to facilitate the engagement of students/learners in developing and co-producing the kind of community they would want.
- There is a growing body of published research in this area. While there has been a focus on Muslims, the findings have wider relevance and should be used to prompt a discussion with students/learners of all faith identities about their needs:
  - QIA research into reasons for different levels of achievement (to be published);
  - LSC research into the issues faced in engaging young Muslim students/learners in Further Education (to be published);
  - National Ecumenical Agency in FE report on Making Space for Faith (<http://www.fbfe.org.uk/documents/>);

- Research by the Muslim Youth Helpline on services for young Muslims (<http://www.myh.org.uk/>);
- LSC research into volunteering in FE to inform the development of a strategy for promoting this (to be published).
- QIA is funding an action research and development project which involves working with sites across the FE system to map and establish effective ‘pastoral support’ practice. The field work will lead to the development of an on-line tool-kit which colleges can use to develop and improve their pastoral support. The tool-kit will be available April 2008.
- CEL is intending to offer two new awards in its “Leadership of Learner Voice” national awards: one for learner voice contributing to social cohesion and one for learner voice contributing to interfaith dialogue and understanding.
- The DCSF Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities provides a menu of positive activities for young people across the country with a clear expectation that integrated youth support services work closely with colleges on this. This will provide colleges with an opportunity to lever in resource to help their students/learners engage in extra-curricular activities.

## **B2: Student/Learners: curriculum and citizenship**

The nature of what is taught and the availability of particular courses that focus on citizenship and that will enable students/learners to play a full and responsible part in the world of work and wider society can make a major difference. Post-16 students/learners will be at college to follow particular courses of their own choice so it is important to embed citizenship though context or content that builds other skills employers will need. Teaching post-16 citizenship skills provides active, creative opportunities for young people to build on the learning developed through the national curriculum and offers significant opportunities to understand diversity and promote community cohesion.

As they approach adult status, students/learners need the flexibility to take a lead in exploring and acting on citizenship issues of direct relevance to them and to review their learning, as much as possible in real life situations.

Post-16 citizenship activities include representative structures for students/learners, young people-led campaigns and events, research projects and community involvement. These activities may stand alone or form part of other courses studied and may or may not lead to a formal citizenship qualification.

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## Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education:

The College has created a DVD, entitled 'Cultural Diversity – Life in the Different Communities', following nine communities in North and North East Lincolnshire: Sikh, Islam, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Chinese, Polish, African, and Bangladeshi. Through interviews and following members of these communities in their daily lives the reality of life in today's society for minority groups is explored. The project used the skills of a local film company which spent four months closely following the people representing the communities. The DVD will be available with additional paper-based materials as a training resource for organisations and will be added to the Institute's distance learning package on Diversity.

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Available resources include:

- QCA guidance for post-16 citizenship provides a curriculum framework along with free training, development, resources and information for colleges. The main aims of the guidance are to:
  - establish what post-16 citizenship involves;
  - promote and support the development of high-quality post-16 provision;
  - ensure progression from national curriculum citizenship;
  - provide information on implementing, managing and developing post-16 citizenship programmes; and
  - provide case studies showing post-16 citizenship programmes in action.

- The QCA are developing a new secondary curriculum website which will have a section dedicated to promoting learning about identity and cultural understanding with case studies from schools which have made this a priority in their curriculum.
- The LSC-funded All Faiths and None (AFAN) programme will create a web-based resource consisting of personal perspectives on a range of subjects written by people with a variety of beliefs (including atheists) as a resource for those wanting to encourage mutual understanding between groups. These will be available by April 2008.

### **C: Partnership Working: engaging with community partners**

Colleges make a significant contribution to the promotion of community cohesion and social integration in the locality in which they operate. This role is further enhanced when targeted interventions are undertaken together with effective and proactive outreach work with all sections of the local community. Ofsted found the majority of colleges have links with external organisations which assisted their race relations activities. Through these, colleges were making a significant contribution to community cohesion and development, including good race relations and social inclusion.

Colleges will be key partners in the work that Local Authorities are undertaking to build resilience to violent extremism. Communities and Local Government (CLG) launched a £6m Preventing Violent Extremism in 2007/8 for around 70 local authorities and a number of colleges have been involved in the delivery and oversight of that work. CLG has promised £45m for 'local partnerships' over the Spending Review period – details of how this can be accessed will be announced shortly.

Colleges also can be much more embedded within their communities and shaped by them through a range of structures from board membership to recruitment of staff to the relations they build with their students/learners. This gives them a unique opportunity to genuinely address the aspirations and challenges within an area.

While the critical task for colleges is to build strong relationships and open and accountable partnerships with the full range of community groups in the local area, some of those groups are not yet aware of the critical role FE plays in the lives of many of their community members. Equally, some colleges have much to learn from community groups. Colleges can significantly enhance their reputation by building robust bridges with the entire range of organisations in their locality with whom valuable joint work on promoting cohesion and identifying violence and extremism could be undertaken. **Annex D** provides advice on engagement with the police.

Available resources include:

- LSC-funded National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE (FBFE) Regional Development Officers facilitate collaborative working between colleges and faith communities and assist the development of multi-faith chaplaincies. Details of these are at: <http://www.fbfe.org.uk>.
- The Home Office is developing a proposal to improve local police liaison with colleges by establishing and extending a network of identified university neighbourhood policing officers.
- *Faith In the Community: Leadership Challenges in the Learning and Skills Sector* (CEL March 2007) – research on College leaders improving their links with local Muslim Communities. This can be accessed at: <http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/UsersDoc/FaithInCommunity.pdf>
- ContactPoint will provide a quick way for practitioners working with young people (up to their 18th birthday) to find out who else is working with the same young person. ContactPoint will be deployed to local authorities in England and National Partners in 2008, beginning with 17 'early adopter' local authorities in the North West and Barnardo's.

### Question 3:

We are exploring other forms of support that could be developed. Which ones would be most useful?



- Developing standards, training or other support for particular job roles.
- Provide guidance on the nature of CPD activities that relate to staff capacity in this area.
- Supporting national student/learner faith/belief organisations in encouraging local student/learner faith/belief societies to engage in inter-faith dialogue and work.
- Adding a question about the student/learner's faith in surveys such as the LSC Learner Satisfaction survey and the Individualised Learner Record, in order to identify how the faith dimension relates to other measures.
- Develop a set of prompts and ideas to enable colleges to explore the needs of students/learners with different faith/belief identities in order to understand their needs.
- Review colleges' practical experience of dealing with and preventing violence and violent extremism (including up-stream work on community cohesion) in order to develop a practical understanding of key outcomes and the kinds of interventions that can be effective.

### Question 4:

Are there others which could be provided?



### Question 5:

Do you have practical experience that you would like to share with us in taking this work forward? If so, please give your contact details and a brief overview of what you can offer.



## 6. Taking the Work Forward

This is the first time we have consulted with colleges and other further education providers on community cohesion and the important dimension of shared values and prevention of violent extremism. Our view is that this will work best where colleges identify and implement solutions that work in their particular circumstances, supported by the relevant agencies and by good practice from around the network. However, there are initiatives that relate to this that should be borne in mind.

Ofsted already inspects colleges against a range of criteria which directly relate to community cohesion, including student/learner safety and compliance with Equality and Diversity legislation. From September 2008, Ofsted will include community cohesion as an explicit element within its inspection of maintained schools. It will also be reviewing its Common Inspection Framework (CIF) in time for a revised version to become operational for 2009.

The LSC is currently piloting the Framework for Excellence (Framework). The main aims of the Framework are to provide a single, unified framework for assessing and reporting achievement in all key areas of performance. The use of the Framework will lead to better and more relevant outcomes for learners and employers, and a better reputation for the FE system. The Framework will include Ofsted's CIF rating as its Quality of Provision Key Performance area. In addition, the Framework, as part of its Learner Views Survey, will seek students/learners' views on whether they feel they have been treated fairly and with respect by staff as well as whether their views are being listened and responded to.

### Question 6:

Are there other measures we could consider to facilitate the identification and dissemination of effective practice?



Vocational training often takes place beyond the classroom or providers workspace and is delivered within employers' workplaces - Apprenticeships are one such example. This will present a different set of challenges and opportunities for providers as they deliver training to a diverse range of groups within a workplace.

### Question 7:

How can the concerns raised within this document be responded to in work-based training situations?



### Question 8:

What scope is there to take on board the suggestions and support being proposed within work-based training situations?



## 7. Next Steps in the Consultation

This is the first time we have debated these issues widely in the FE sector. The consultation has been prepared jointly by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Association of Colleges and follows a wide-ranging series of discussions with key stakeholders including College Principals. We are very grateful for their time and support in this work.

This document is being sent directly to Principals and Chief Executives and we expect college management, including Governing bodies, to consult with their staff, the learner representative forums and students/learners as appropriate in designing and implementing policies and procedures in response.

We are interested in the views of those working in colleges, students/learners and those working with colleges in promoting community cohesion or preventing violent extremism.

Our aim is to:

- Affirm the contribution of colleges to promoting community cohesion focusing particularly on their role in preventing violent extremism through delivery of the five objectives described;
- Provide some practical advice on how to take these objectives forward; and
- Identify the support the sector needs in taking this forward.

The consultation will run from 11 February to 6 May. Questions are presented throughout the document and there are two main opportunities to respond:

- Visit the DIUS on-line consultation hosted within the DCSF website where you can respond to the consultation questions on-line or download these and print them out to return your response by post:  
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>
- Participate in one of four discussion events taking place around the country - visit our Consultation Workshop website (<http://www.livegroup.co.uk/collegecohesion/>) to see details of these and register your interest in attending.

## **Annex A: Scenarios and Responses**

The following scenarios are all based on real events that have occurred at universities and colleges in the UK. While these have largely taken place within HE Institutions they could occur within FE Institutions and provide a useful basis for colleges developing their policies and practice in this area.

### **Introduction**

This guidance is about tackling violent extremism. It is not about eroding the long-established traditions of encouraging radical debate, ideas and freedom of speech within universities and colleges. Universities and colleges are in a unique position to provide a forum for open debate and discussion. In this way, they embody the shared values of society which are essential for students from all backgrounds to experience first hand.

This section seeks to identify some of the activities or incidents in and around colleges which could potentially be associated with violent extremists. That is not to say that such activities are necessarily illegitimate or criminal. Colleges need to strike a difficult balance between maintaining academic freedom whilst ensuring that extremists can never stifle debate or impose their views.

Colleges should be alert to the possibility of unsubstantiated allegations being made against individuals or groups when considering how to respond to activities and incidents. They should make judgements about how much internal investigation to undertake before taking concerns to the police.

### **Example One – Suspected extremist literature on campus**

A member of teaching staff has raised concerns with university authorities about some literature that was left lying around in a university room in which she took a tutorial group. Some leaflets were written in English, and others appeared to be in Arabic. She reported that the literature in English had titles such as 'Who is a legitimate target?' and 'From Jihad to a new world order'. One of the students in the tutorial group reported that she had seen lots of the pamphlets lying around other places in the university earlier in the day, and a number of students walking around with bundles of them.

#### **Issues to consider**

- The leaflets may constitute a criminal offence under terrorism or racial and religious hatred legislation. They may also breach internal policies on these issues, or on hate crimes. Do you have in place procedures to obtain the necessary legal advice where this is needed?
- Do you have a reporting mechanism for staff and students/learners to report any concerns within the college? Are the reporting mechanisms clear and understood? Who should decide whether to inform the police? Do they know how to seek advice from local police?
- Do you have the facilities to encourage exploration and debate of the issues raised in this scenario?
- What is the local policy on room bookings and contents of posters and meeting flyers?
- Does the college have the means of translating foreign language material if necessary?

## **Example Two – Extremist speaker attending University seminar**

A group of students have approached their personal tutor to express concern about a speaker who has been asked by a student society to deliver a talk entitled ‘Terrorist or Freedom Fighter?’ They believe him to use extremist language and think he has commented in the media that acts of terrorism against British citizens are justified.

### **Issues to consider**

- The speaker may have the right to express his views and staff and students the right to hear them, providing there is no likelihood of disorder or a crime being committed and no interference with the rights of others. It might be appropriate to ensure events or a series of events are balanced, with speakers offering differing viewpoints and arguments
- The speaker’s conduct could amount to a criminal offence under terrorism legislation or a public order offence. It is in the interest of the college to prevent public disorder on its premises, and they should establish the speaker’s track record. If the speaker had indeed made the comments ascribed to him the college should consider excluding him from speaking on the premises. If there is no evidence to support the claims, the college will still need to deal with the concerns raised and decide on the potential impact of the talk on the wider student/learner communities.
- What is the local policy to ensure that the college authorities are aware of, and, if appropriate, advise on external speakers with learner representative forums?

### **Example Three – Inappropriate student use of the Internet**

College library staff have reported that a student has approached them expressing concerns at images she had seen fellow students looking at on computers in an IT room. She reported that two males were looking at some kind of home-made images of other men dressed in military and civilian clothing holding guns. The two men were joined by two others and she could see that they were watching shots being fired and explosions on the computer. The images then appeared to show somebody making a home made explosive device.

#### **Issues to consider**

- The dissemination of terrorist publications is an offence under section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006.
- The college should have a policy on internet use and internet security as staff and students/learners may need to access material of this sort as part of legitimate research. If it is alleged that these policies are breached then what is the process for sensitively investigating allegations, and if necessary who should decide whether to inform the police?

### **Example Four – Concerns from staff and students about potential threats to their safety**

A senior staff member whose staff and research students have been receiving letters from an animal rights group contacts the security team. Each year this group holds an 'Awards Ceremony' and sends out letters to people or groups they hold responsible for the worst aspects of animal cruelty. The Institution confirms that a copy of the letter and the names of the recipients has been posted on the group's website. The staff and research students are concerned that they are going to be targeted by an animal rights group and activists who are sympathetic to the animal rights agenda.

#### **Issues to consider**

- Is there a reporting mechanism for staff and students/learners to report any concerns within your college? Are these clear and understood? Who should decide whether to inform the police? Do they know who to contact for advice from local police?
- Are there publicly stated policies on intimidation and harassment?
- Are anti-bullying policies robustly enforced?
- Are staff aware of the college's procedures should a violent incident occur?

### **Example Five – Concerns about potentially suspicious group activity**

A student has made a staff member aware of a group of students who meet up on Monday evenings to take part in a martial arts club followed by a 'current affairs discussion group' on subjects ranging from 'The duties of Muslims in the UK today', 'Islam and the West' and 'The plight of Muslims across the world.' These activities have been advertised through leaflets on a university or college notice-board. The leaflet does not give verifiable contact information about the organisers but does give out a contact mobile phone number. The student informing the staff member had spoken to an attendee of the Monday evening session, and from his conversation was concerned that the activities were organised by a group seeking to spread violent extremist views in the name of Islam.

#### **Issues to consider**

- Is there a need for a local policy on groups advertised within the college? Could the college work with its learner representative forum to develop one? Should one of the student/learner bodies contact the group? Is there a role for a college religious advisor/member of multi-faith chaplaincy team to become involved?
- Are the reporting mechanisms for staff clear and understood? Who should decide whether to contact the group, consult the learner representative forum or inform the police?
- Does the learner representative forum have a policy to ensure that college societies are open and inclusive?

### **Example Six – Use of University or College prayer facilities**

A student has spoken to their personal tutor regarding concerns about alleged inappropriate use of a prayer room in a university or college. The student reported that a prayer room appeared to be off-limits and claimed offensive material was on display on the inside of the room which could not be seen from the outside as the windows of the room had been covered with posters.

#### **Issues to consider**

- If multi-faith prayer rooms are provided, is there a 'fair use' policy to ensure prayer rooms are seen as a shared resource and accessible by all faiths?
- Are there unregulated prayer rooms for different faiths? How should the college administration ensure these are accessible by all who want to use them?
- Are the reporting mechanisms for staff and students clear and understood?

# Annex B: Violent Extremism and the Recruitment Process Used by Violent Extremist Groups

## 1. Al-Qa'ida influenced violent extremism

The Government judges that there is a real, current and sustained threat to the UK from Al-Qa'ida (AQ) influenced terrorism. The threat is international in its scope, involving a variety of individuals, networks and groups who are driven by violent and extremist beliefs. They are indiscriminate – aiming to commit murder and cause mass casualties, regardless of the age, nationality, or faith/belief of their victims; and they are prepared to commit suicide to do so. The overall assessment is that the threat is unlikely to diminish for some years. Violent AQ-influenced extremist activity is justified using a literal, distorted and unrepresentative interpretation of Islamic texts to advocate and justify violence in order to achieve fundamental change in society (see below “The Single Narrative”). Individuals involved in this form of extremism can be involved in criminal activity. They can either be directly involved in violence and terrorist acts, or can be involved indirectly through inciting others to become involved in violence or supporting or funding violent activities.

The process of an individual turning to violent extremism (not just AQ influenced violent extremism) can occur because of a variety of factors, of which no single factor predominates. Existing evidence from this country and from overseas suggests the key factors that lead to violent extremism of this kind are:

- An **ideology** which justifies terrorism by manipulating theology as well as history and contemporary politics;
- **Individuals and networks** who promote violent extremism, through new media and in **vulnerable spaces and institutions** in this country;
- **Individuals who are vulnerable** to the messaging of violent extremism for a range of personal factors;
- **Communities** which do not have resilience to resist and reject the narrative and activities of violent extremists; and
- A number of **grievances**, some substantive, which resonate with individuals and are exploited by violent extremists.

There is no single profile of those most susceptible to these factors but they are likely to be young (generally younger than 30) and male (although the number of women who support and participate in violent extremism is increasing). The evidence also suggests that radicalisation is focused in certain geographical areas of the country. The vast majority of Muslims in the UK and abroad reject both extremism and violence: violent extremists represent only a tiny minority of individuals in the UK and abroad. A clear distinction should be made between these extremist individuals and the faith they might falsely claim to be associated with or represent. Extremists who wrongly argue for support for acts of terrorism present a threat to all students/learners and communities. Moreover propagating false perceptions about the values and beliefs of Islam potentially adds to a vicious circle that may fuel discrimination and Islamophobia.

This may, in turn, exacerbate violent extremism in the name of Islam, as individuals perceive that they are increasingly marginalised. Law enforcement and intelligence operations are vital to containing the threat but on their own they will not be able to resolve it. Government, communities and local agencies also need to work together to refute the language and the arguments of those trying to advance the cause of violent extremism and counter the efforts they are making to recruit others. There are limits to what central Government can do – and should try to do – in this area. Continued progress depends on local authorities, the police, those working with young people, community organisations and the voluntary sector. Violent extremist groups and networks have operated in a number of settings within the wider community and in specific settings such as prisons, youth clubs, schools, universities and further education colleges. Colleges should be alert to how different forms of unacceptable behaviour and extremism within a college can interact and should be aware of the need to support the vast majority of individuals at the college who hold more moderate views and so strengthen their resilience to the messages that the extremists transmit.

## **2. The terrorists' "Single Narrative"**

Violent extremists rely on simplifying complex political, philosophical, ethical, religious and historical facts and using the resulting claims of oppression to recruit vulnerable individuals and incite a violent response. Al-Qa'ida's "global jihad" ideology uses a view of history and international relations that says that the corruption of Islam and the (supposedly) impoverished state of the Muslim world is the result of a Zionist-Christian alliance against Islam.

The narrative draws on a number of concerns – some of which may be quite widely shared by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. These include perceived injustices (e.g. Palestine); opposition to military intervention (e.g. in Iraq or Afghanistan); local perceptions of discrimination (e.g. a view that stop and search rules are not operated fairly); and concerns about globalisation (e.g. perceived as an imposition of "Western" values).

Government acknowledges that many people are concerned about these issues. And we actively encourage each issue to be discussed and debated on its own merits with proper intellectual and ethical rigour. But the Al-Qa'ida narrative relies on audiences lacking an in-depth knowledge of the issues and on the spread of misinformation. It ignores factual evidence to the contrary (e.g. British military intervention to protect Kosovan Albanian Muslims; UK support for Turkey's membership of the EU). Its potency as propaganda is based on its propensity to weave fact with subjective opinion and emotion to seek to occupy a moral and religious high-ground. As a result, the Al-Qa'ida message is persuasive to many and is actively used by large numbers of people and networks promoting violent extremism.

### **3. The recruitment and grooming process used by violent extremist groups**

The following section highlights some themes that could play a role in the process of recruiting and grooming individuals to violent extremism within a college. Similar themes and tactics exist for all forms of violent extremism in colleges.

#### **Networks**

The nature of colleges means that the student/learner population is fluid. Therefore the extent of different types of extremism within a college can change over time. The level of extremism can also be disproportionately affected by the simultaneous presence of a few like-minded individuals. Even one particularly determined individual can have a significant impact on the extent of extremism at a particular college.

Colleges can provide a recruiting ground for extremists of all forms, particularly those that target young people. Student/learner communities provide an opportunity for extremist individuals to form new networks, and extend existing ones. Different categories of students/learners may be affected.

There are those who quite rightly are keen to explore the wider issues of their faith; those who may be actively looking for extremist individuals with whom to associate; those who may be new to a college environment and vulnerable to 'grooming' by individuals with an agenda as they search for friends and social groups. For example grooming may involve separating students/learners from their roots (such as family and old friends) thereby isolating them from alternative views. This is a tactic deployed by recruiters, and can be more easily achieved in a setting where young people are separated from their family environment.

## **Segregation**

Two of the main reasons for segregation existing within a college are lack of opportunity to mix with others and making the decision to separate from mainstream society. Lack of opportunity to interact can have a negative impact on how individuals view themselves and are viewed by others and negatively impacts on an individual's university experience. Feelings of isolation, retreating into one's own community and feeling hostility towards the 'other' can exacerbate extremism.

## **Student/learner societies and other groups**

The overwhelming majority of faith-based student/learner organisations are moderate and democratic groupings that seek to provide students/learners with accurate information on religious beliefs, history and civilisations, as well as organising prayer meetings, speakers and other activities. These societies can have an influential role within a college with members varying in numbers across institutions. For those who are members, these societies can wield significant influence in their lives through organising liturgical and other activities.

It follows that should control of a university or college society or other group fall into the hands of extremist individuals, this can play a significant role in the extent of extremism within a college. Taking control of Friday prayers, other prayer meetings or sermons and the use of charismatic radical speakers can be means by which extreme groups seek to spread their messages.

## **Outside speakers**

Student/learner groups commonly hold debates and talks on a variety of issues and often invite speakers or preachers into colleges. This is an important part of encouraging vibrant debate and discussion about issues of concern. However, on occasion such speakers hold very extreme views which could include advocating and justifying the use of violence. These individuals can be forceful, persuasive and eloquent, and often have a scholarly background, the latter fact being emphasised in order to give them greater credibility in the eyes of students. They seek to exploit feelings of alienation and sometimes offer "religious" justifications for extreme actions. It is increasingly likely that speakers would be careful to keep their messages within acceptable limits while speaking at college meetings.

### **Peer group pressure and bullying**

Peer group pressure at meetings and debates can help to sway opinion, bringing moderates over to a more radical viewpoint. Those who have a differing viewpoint can be afraid to speak and differentiate themselves from the majority. Individuals who openly disagree could be opening themselves up to accusations of not being a true Muslim and becoming sidelined. Sometimes a group collectively adopts a more extreme position than would be expected from an analysis of views held by individual members of the group. Extremist individuals have also been known to 'groom' likely recruits, by closely observing those willing to adopt more extreme viewpoints or those perceived to be vulnerable and more likely to be easily influenced. There have been instances whereby extremist individuals have befriended vulnerable students/learners in order to create a culture of dependency and influence over them.

### **Meetings subsequently attended outside a college**

FE societies and other groups are often inter-linked, as well as being in touch with networks outside the college. Details of external meetings can be passed on by word of mouth and particularly religious students/learners can be targeted, or those who have shown a particular interest and fervour in the subjects of debates. At these external meetings opinions can be more openly aired and more extreme views can be roused.

Individuals may be encouraged to feel angry, frustrated, humiliated and powerless and may develop a strong desire to take some form of action to seek redress. Colleges should ensure they are aware of the local community context and how that might impact on students.

# Annex C: Legislative Framework Relating to Preventing Violent Extremism

## Legal update: Introduction

When making a decision on how to deal with an incident, colleges will need to take into account the concepts of reasonableness and proportionality. The Commission for Racial Equality advises that, if a right under the European Convention on Human Rights is to be restricted or limited in any way, then it will be necessary to demonstrate that:

- the decision has been reached after careful consideration;
- the decision is based on evidence;
- the decision is necessary to prevent crime or disorder, or otherwise to protect the rights and freedoms of others;
- the decision is proportionate.

In essence any action taken must be a reasonable response to the perceived or actual threat and must be proportionate to the situation. Colleges need to be able to show that any decision has been based on consideration of all available information and is sound. If a reasonable decision is taken and documented as a result of evidenced balancing of the all the relevant issues, an institution should be able to defend its actions against any subsequent claim.

**Freedom of Speech.** Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986, which covers freedom of speech, applies to Institutions within the further education sector (as well as Universities and other Institutions) – see section 43(5).

Colleges have a particular position with regard to freedom of speech. Under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, persons concerned in the government of an Institution in the higher or further education sector have a duty to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students/learners, employees and visiting speakers. They must also ensure insofar as reasonably practicable that the use of the Institution's premises is not denied to any individual or body or people on the grounds of their beliefs, views, policies or objectives. The right to freedom of expression can be subject to limitations provided those limitations can be justified. A limitation can only be justified if it is in accordance with the law, is in pursuit of a legitimate aim (including the prevention of disorder or crime; to protect health or morals; or, in the interests of national security) and is necessary in a democratic society.

### **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003**

Colleges also need to be particularly aware of the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. These Regulations outlaw direct and indirect discrimination (and victimisation and harassment) on grounds of religion or belief. The indirect discrimination provisions apply where a policy or practice has a detrimental impact on a particular religious group that cannot be justified. Essential to the issue of justification is the relevance and proportionality of the policy or practice. The Regulations apply to the employment of staff and to the provision of vocational training, including education in Institutions of further or higher education.

### **Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The amended Race Relations Act requires colleges, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

### **Disclosures to the Police**

If a college suspects that an offence has been or is likely to be committed then a report should be made to the police. Colleges should have a policy on the release of student/learner information which should be followed. If the police require information from a college then they will make a request for it. A court order is not necessarily required before a disclosure can be made to the police, although if a college receives such an order it must be complied with. Most Police Forces will have their own request form which should always include a brief outline of the nature of the investigation, the student/learner's role in that investigation, the signature of the investigating officer and will, if necessary, provide how the request is compatible with the Data Protection Act 1998. Disclosures should be made in writing rather than over the telephone.

Under section 38B of the Terrorism Act 2000 a person commits an offence if he or she has information which he or she knows or believes might be of material assistance in preventing another person from committing an act of terrorism or securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person, in the UK, for an offence involving the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism and he or she fails to disclose that information to a constable as soon as reasonably practicable. Section 19 of the Terrorism Act 2000 places a legal duty on a person to disclose to a constable that he believes or suspects that an offence under sections 15 to 18 of that Act has been committed, if the belief or suspicion is based on information that came to the person in the course of a trade, profession, business or employment. Sections 15 to 18 deal with offences relating to funding terrorism and the laundering of terrorist property. If a person fails to make a disclosure in accordance with section 19 they commit an offence. Section 21A of the Terrorism Act 2000 creates a similar offence in relation to information that comes to a person in the regulated sector.

## **Legislation Enacted In 2006**

The following provides an update on key pieces of legislation which have been enacted in 2006 and which have a direct impact on the issues surrounding extremism.

### **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 was passed by Parliament on 16 February 2006. It is intended to extend existing incitement to racial hatred laws that protect certain religious groups to provide protection for people of all faiths and those of no faith by creating a number of new offences which relate to the stirring up of religious hatred. This legislation will operate in England and Wales under part 3A of the Public Order Act 1986, which is due to come into force in February 2007 which the 2006 Act is due to be commenced.

The new legislation creates a number of new offences including an offence for a person to use threatening words or behaviour, or to display any threatening written material, with the intent to stir up religious hatred. For this purpose, religious hatred is defined as hatred against a group of people defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief.

Colleges should note that the legislation is not intended to impinge on students/learners' freedom of speech: the Act does not prevent students/learners from offending, criticising or ridiculing faiths without any intention to stir up religious hatred. Rather, protection will be provided from the stirring up of hatred against students/learners because of their faith or lack of it.

### **Terrorism Act 2006**

This Act came into force (in the main) on 13 April 2006 and created offences which include:

- Publishing or causing to be published a statement which is likely to be understood as directly or indirectly encouraging terrorism. Indirect encouragement includes glorification as long as those to whom the statement is published understand that the conduct that is glorified is glorified as conduct that should be emulated (section 1).
- Disseminating violent extremist publications. Dissemination includes distributing, circulating, selling, e-mailing or offering for download. A publication will be a terrorist publication if it contains matter which direct or indirectly encourages terrorism, or is useful in acts of terrorism and was included in the publication wholly or mainly for the purpose of being so useful. Indirect encouragement includes glorification as long as those to whom the publication is made available understand that the conduct that is glorified is glorified as conduct that should be emulated (section 2).
- Preparing to commit an act of terrorism or to assist others to do so, if the defendant has the necessary intention to commit an act of terrorism or assist others to do so (section 5).

- Giving or receiving training in certain terrorist skills such as the making handling or use of a noxious substance (section 6).
- Attending at a place used for terrorist training (section 8).

The Act also increases the maximum period that a person can be held after arrest under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and before charge from 14 days to 28 days.

There are opportunities for students/learners in colleges to be manipulated by individuals who commit these offences or to commit these offences themselves. Examples of undesirable and possibly criminal conduct in this context could include: an individual handing out flyers or leaflets or offering for sale books, videos or DVDs that encourage violent extremism; the use of a college IT system to circulate material that encourages violent extremism; the use of college facilities to carry out training in terrorist skills.

## **Equality Act 2006**

Part 2 of The Equality Act 2006, which came into force in April 2007, makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief in:

- Education
- The provision of goods, facilities and services
- The use and disposal of premises
- The exercise of public functions.

The measures will afford protection from:

- *Direct discrimination*, where a person is treated less favourably than another.
- *Indirect discrimination*, where a provision, criterion or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religion or belief at a disadvantage when compared to others which cannot be reasonably justified.
- *Victimisation*, where someone is treated less favourably than others because, for example, they have complained of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief or have assisted someone else in a complaint.

Individuals are protected not only if they suffer direct discrimination because of their own religion or belief, but also if they are directly discriminated against because of the religion or belief of someone they are associated with (such as a friend or member of their family). Individuals are also protected if they are discriminated against because the discriminator mistakenly thinks that they belong to a certain religion, for example because of what they are wearing, even when they do not.

The concept of religion or belief also covers a lack of religion or belief, which means that people will be protected if they suffer discrimination because they have no specific religion or belief.

## Annex D: Engagement with the Police

There are a number of intervention options available to colleges that may be more appropriate than direct police enforcement action. These can range from overt engagement and diversion work to simply enforcing existing rules. A partnership approach between police and colleges may enable early intervention to take place that could negate a later need for enforcement action.

However those few colleges that identify they may have a problem with violent extremist groups will be fully supported by the police in their efforts to promote good college and community safety.

Many colleges have highly effective multi-level liaison with their local uniform police. However, it is important that these partnerships between the police and colleges are able to address effectively the full range of policing issues that may be found in a college. This includes instances of violent extremism that may lead to terrorism. The police are keen to build on existing relationships to support colleges in recognising and responding to such instances should they occur.

With the complexities and difficulties surrounding violent extremism, the police are seeking to promote a position whereby colleges have the confidence to share concerns about emerging (or existing) instances of violent extremism at the college with them. Equally, it is important for the police (and wider community) to have confidence that a local college can recognise if it has a problem and ask for help. In order to assess this capability it may be useful for colleges to consider the following questions:

- Can staff identify violent extremist behaviour?
- Do staff have the confidence to report it within the college?
- Does the college have the processes in place, and the willingness, to get that information to the police?

Staff in the college may be unsure of how to recognise signs of violent extremism, or should they become aware, may be unsure of what they can or should do with that information. Police can offer support and guidance to colleges in developing strategies and policies. Police may also offer training to assist colleges to recognise and respond to potential violent extremism. The police will also take the appropriate law enforcement action on the rare occasions this may be required.

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