

LSE PREVENT Group Meeting

28 October 2015 12:00-13:30 COL.2.01

Minutes

Chair: Robin Hoggard

Attending: Jim Walters, Hannah Bannister, Aysha Al-Fekaiki, Rachel Ward, Robin Hoggard, Marta Gajewska, Alan Revel, Sunil Kumar, Michael Blackwell, Jethro Perkins, Paul Thornbury

Apologies: Veronique Mizgailo, Adrian Thomas

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. RH reminded the Group that it was only its second meeting;

2. Purpose of the group and membership

- 2.1. SK reported to the group that the post of UG Dean, previously held by Peter Howlett, was under review;
- 2.2. RH explained that JP had been invited to join the meeting not as a group member at this stage, but because of the IT implications of the Prevent guidance;

3. TOR

- 3.1. The Group agreed there were no changes to current TOR;

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 4.1. RH reminded the Group that at the previous meeting, it was agreed that the School should not implement any Prevent guidance unless and until it became law;
- 4.2. RH pointed out to the Group that there had been opposition to aspects of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act and Prevent guidance even from within the Conservative government, as well as from members of the previous coalition government and in the House of Lords. This had resulted in the final guidance being less prescriptive than initially feared;

5. Context to Prevent

- 5.1. The statutory guidance for higher and further education was approved by Parliament on 17 September 2015 and entered into force the following day;
- 5.2. Following that, a message was sent to the LSE community by the Deputy Director and Provost, with assurance that *'no system of active monitoring students or their activities in the context of Prevent will be established; and that no referral of any individual in this context outside LSE will be made without the recommendation of the Prevent group and the express approval of the Director or the Provost as deputy. Approval will only be given in cases of serious and well-founded concern.'*
- 5.3. SK asked for clarification of what was meant by cases being referred;

- 5.3.1.RH responded that the initial external referral point would be the Police, which was why we had to be so careful;
- 5.4. SK asked who would be the main contact point for Prevent referrals at the School;
- 5.4.1.RH confirmed that it would be RH
- 5.5. JP commented that in absence so far of formal training, if IT staff came across any Prevent-related behaviour, they were advised to assume by default that the person or people concerned were acting in good faith for legitimate academic reasons, rather than to presume some intent related to terrorism. JP would bring any cases of clear concern to the Prevent Group;
- 5.6. JW pointed out that this was a pastoral matter and fed into the review of Deans. JW recalled that he had received an anonymous email informing him that a person invited to speak at campus was dangerous; it then had gone to Peter Howlett (then UG Dean) and subsequently it became clear that Islamic Society had not been aware of the dangerous dimension of the invitee. JW said that that was a representation of an important role that the Dean had had, and whoever would replace that post would have to be able to deal with such matters sensitively.
- 5.7. SK said that often the problem was the lack of joined-up communications. SK expressed a view that Prevent Group was useful for analysis of lessons learnt, but that there was no single contact point in Departments.
- 5.8. SK enquired whether there would be representation of Muslim students at the Group, following up on a discussion minuted at the previous Group meeting.
- 5.8.1. RH responded that that it was decided not to have such representation, as Prevent was not directed at Muslim students and to single them out would risk creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. However briefings for or meetings with Muslim – and any other interested – students would be a good idea.
- 5.9. MB said that there was a danger that Departments might try to handle everything internally and not report them up; as a result, matters might not be dealt with consistently across the School. MB suggested that there was a need for communications to academic staff to ensure they were aware of and complied with the School policy;
- 5.9.1.Group members mentioned a number of specific allegations of discriminatory behaviour. It was agreed that these should not be minuted as it could identify individuals, but that all allegations should be followed up through the appropriate channels, where this was not already being done.
- 5.10. AF enquired about the status of the review of the role of Deans;
- 5.10.1. HB responded that recommendations for possible solutions would be presented to Academic Board at their meeting in December 2015;
- 5.11. RH agreed to work on communications and clear any proposed drafts with the Group before proceeding.

6. Action Plan

- 6.1. RH reported to the Group that an Action Plan was a requirement by HEFCE;
- 6.2. RH pointed out that the Prevent guidance had in effect the status of law;
- 6.3. RH said that one interpretation of the guidance could be that the School would not have to change any of its policies or actions in substance, as most of the relevant policies and

- procedures were probably already sufficiently robust. However, proving this to HEFCE as our regulators would involve a certain amount of bureaucratic activity and reporting;
- 6.4. SK enquired about whether the Harassment Policy captured issues relating to Prevent;
 - 6.4.1.HB responded that the Equality Taskforce was preparing a working group to review the policy;
 - 6.4.2.SK enquired whether the term 'harassment' would be reviewed in light of 6.4 above;
 - 6.4.3.HB responded that the main point of the review was to look at guidance and signposts; HB added that the Group was headed by Joy Whyte; SK agreed to contact Joy.
 - 6.5. JW raised a question of the difference between being critical of a religion and discrimination;
 - 6.6. RH referred to Point 4 of the Action Plan – 'Assess risks from external speakers and events' – and pointed out that Room Bookings & Events played lead roles here;
 - 6.7. RH referred to Point 5 of the Action Plan - 'Ensure estate security staff are aware of Prevent duty' – and reported that he would be in touch with Paul Thornbury about this;
 - 6.8. RH referred to Points 12-13 – 'Ensure sufficient support for students through provision of welfare, chaplaincy, safeguarding and pastoral care' and 'Ensure appropriate policies in place for use of prayer room/faith-related facilities' and pointed out it was assigned to Deans and 'others';
 - 6.8.1.SK suggested that these could include Advisors to male and female students;
 - 6.8.2.JW said that the Group needed to identify what HEFCE meant by Point 12.
 - 6.8.3.RH reminded the Group that HEFCE would be requiring various reports from the School, including an Action Plan.
 - 6.8.4.JW said that in regards to Point 13 the School had a policy on non-public use of the prayer room – it was only open to LSE staff and students, attendees of LSE based conferences, Library users, and temporarily to workers of an office building in Lincoln's Inn Fields. JW offered to send RH the relevant policies;
 - 6.9. RH referred to Point 14 – 'Ensure appropriate policies and procedures in place for use of IT, with explicit refs to Prevent duty';
 - 6.9.1.JP said that changes had been made in two policies (Information Security Policy and the Conditions of Use for IT facilities) to accommodate the new Prevent guidance. JP confirmed that the language used was copied from the Guidance to avoid interpretation problems; JP confirmed he was taking those changes to relevant Committees to be agreed through appropriate channels;
 - 6.9.2.SK asked about the School's policy on social media and whether that could also include Prevent guidance;
 - 6.9.3.JP explained that since the School was not hosting any social media platforms itself, it had no responsibility for what the users put there and that the School IT provided guidance rather than policy; SK agreed but raised the question of reputational damage;
 - 6.9.4.JW said that usage of social media was another pastoral care matter;
 - 6.10. RH referred to Point 15 – 'Students' union and societies to cooperate with School policies on Prevent duty' – and pointed out that the LSESU was not in itself subject to the Prevent duty. However, students' unions were subject to oversight by the Charity Commission, which was reported to have already shown interest in one or more London students' unions in the Prevent context.;
 - 6.10.1. AF confirmed that LSESU was in process of creating its own policies in this respect.

- 6.11. RH referred to Points 17-18 – ‘Establish appropriate internal governance and reporting regime, inc. at least Audit Committee and Council at suitable intervals’ and ‘In-depth five-yearly review of compliance by HEFCE.’
- 6.12. RH enquired whether the Group was happy for RH to continue on the basis of the presented Action Plan;
 - 6.12.1. The Group agreed.
- 6.13. RH proposed to put the presented paperwork on the website, as work in progress for the moment;
 - 6.13.1. The Group agreed.

7. ‘Prevent’ duty compliance: Proposed preliminary self-assessment report

- 7.1. RH presented a draft paper to the Group;
- 7.2. RH expressed an opinion that the School did not necessarily have to have a draft of a paper to signify that the issue concerned was being worked on; however, HEFCE seemed likely to want written evidence of compliance in all areas concerned.
- 7.3. With regards to point j) ‘Policies and procedures for approving RHEB-branded events taking place off campus’ – RW said that the School would not always know about these and the only way to find out would have been to look through Finance records to see where we were paying for external venues;
 - 7.3.1. RH agreed that it would be a good start;
- 7.4. SK pointed out that having policies is necessary but it was more about how people use them
 - 7.4.1. RH agreed that it was more about raising awareness;
- 7.5. MB enquired whether this meant that a Departmental event was considered to be less important than a central School event;
 - 7.5.1. RH responded by saying that authors of the guidance may not have recognized how decentralized universities were; RH agreed to reconsider the wording used in the documents;
- 7.6. AR asked whether Student Societies were monitored with regards to their spend of the money they received from Annual Fund
 - 7.6.1. AF confirmed that LSESU had a committee and a robust process in place to monitor that. AF agreed to pass on the relevant policies;
- 7.7. MB pointed out that Alumni Associations were linked with the School but some were known to cause problems;
 - 7.7.1. RH agreed that there had been cases of this;
- 7.8. In relation to point e) SK suggested the wording be reviewed.
 - 7.8.1. RH confirmed that the document was only a draft;
- 7.9. RH asked the Group whether the document could be made public
 - 7.9.1. The Group agreed

8. Other areas for action, including on speakers and events, staff training and welfare/safeguarding

- 8.1. RW asked whether there was an agreed definition of “event” in terms of group size;
 - 8.1.1. RH responded that the spirit of the guidance was to include any size of event;
- 8.2. JW pointed out that the Faith Centre did not have a booking system and student groups invited external speakers;

- 8.2.1.RH said that the Code of Practice on Free Speech was under review and it would be made explicit that the School centrally controlled only certain spaces; other spaces were controlled by other parties, such as the Faith Centre, Residences and the LSESU. In the latter spaces, the Code would still apply, but those who managed the locations would be responsible for ensuring compliance;
- 8.2.2.JW said that some activities were bringing outsiders onto campus.
- 8.2.3.RH suggested that the best thing would be for JW to speak to RW on how to best manage bookings;

9. Engaging and consulting students and staff training

- 9.1. RH said that one way was to publicize what training was available, but said that he had not yet come across anything sophisticated enough for LSE audiences;
- 9.2. JW asked whether the School itself was required to provide training;
 - 9.2.1.RH thought that it could be in-house or externally provided; the main problem at the moment was the lack of anything suitable.
- 9.3. JW confirmed there was a need for training, especially for front line staff; JW suggested he could help put something together;
- 9.4. RH said that JISC were working on training so there should be something available from them in due course;
- 9.5. AF asked whether unconscious bias and racial profiling would be included in the training;
 - 9.5.1. RH confirmed that in his view it would be important to include those;
- 9.6. JW said that the Group could put something together in-house on how to engage with religious belief respectfully;
- 9.7. PT said that it was important to let the students know that the School is under a legal obligation in respect of Prevent;
 - 9.7.1.AF agreed and said that at King's College students were approached in the Prayer Room and on a separate occasion, the Police wanted a list of names from students;
- 9.8. RH asked whether SU wanted to get involved in engaging and consulting with the students;
 - 9.8.1.AF responded that consultation was not an issue, and that attending the Group meeting was reassuring for her; AF suggested that perhaps the Head Sister and Head Brother from Islamic Society could attend the meeting of Prevent Group as well;
 - 9.8.2.RH expressed his worry that engaging with a particular group of students would single them out;
 - 9.8.3.AF responded that the Group should not be shying away from it, either;
 - 9.8.4.HB suggested that an open meeting, or a meeting with some of the members of the Group would be helpful;
 - 9.8.5.RH agreed and added that this was the reason he wanted to share the papers from the meetings on the website;

10. AOB

- 10.1. RH informed the Group that HEFCE consultation on how compliance with the Prevent Guidance would be monitored had just been completed, but we did not yet know the outcome;

11. Next meeting date

- 11.1. Next meeting of the Group to be held before Christmas, when HEFCE deadlines would have been set