



**COUNTER
TERRORISM
POLICING**

Chair, Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Crime and Policing Bill

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Counter Terrorism Policing
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Dear Chair

Thank you providing me with the opportunity to submit written evidence on behalf of Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) to assist you in the legislative scrutiny of the Crime and Policing Bill.

Brief overview of Counter Terrorism Policing

CTP is a collaboration of UK police forces. We have units based regionally across the UK and a headquarters in London. Our principal partners are the UK Intelligence Community. Our nationwide network of exceptional investigators, officers and staff allows us to connect directly with key public agencies, the private sector and our communities. This reach also extends globally, with officers based overseas supporting UK investigations and building the capacity of our international partners.

Our world-leading capabilities can be deployed against a wide range of threats, and where a threat is shared, we work closely with partners to maximise our collective impact. This includes working to restrict the availability of illegal firearms with the National Crime Agency and our extensive work at the UK borders to protect national security. CT Policing is the lead law enforcement organisation for a range of national security threats, much broader than our name suggests. These include: Counter espionage, Counter proliferation, Counter insurgency, National Security Act offences, Official Secrets Act offences and War Crimes.

We welcome the introduction of the Crime and Policing Bill. It is of course for Parliament to resolve the legislation our national security requires but I can advise on the operational implications of the proposed legislation within the context of Counter Terrorism Policing. We are supportive of all of the measures within the Bill which enhance police powers to enable us to more effectively keep people safe and to best protect our communities. This includes the amendment to seizure powers under section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and the management of historic terrorist-connected offenders.

Youth Diversion Orders

I am particularly keen to acknowledge Counter Terrorism Policing's support for Youth Diversion Orders. We are continuing to see a significant increase in the number of young people featuring in our casework, perhaps demonstrated most starkly by our arrest statistics. Since 2019 there has been a clear and sustained rise in the number of under 18s that are subject to a counter-terrorism

investigation. In 2019 just 4% of those arrested were aged under 18. In the same period in 2023 this figure increased to 19%. That was the highest number of arrests in this age group since records began in 2001.

The majority of terrorism arrests of young people involved online activity which ranged from possession and dissemination of TACT material, radicalising others online, aspiring to attack plan and the possession of bomb making material. These offences often occur within encrypted or anonymous platforms which often have insufficient or no moderation including a lack of age and identity checks. Extremists and radical influencers use this space to expose individuals to harmful rhetoric and as a means to engage with a vast audience.

The real world experience of CTP shows very clearly that online content explored by young people, often in conjunction with their additional vulnerabilities and complex needs, can radicalise and escalate pre-existing or new grievances. In the worst case scenario this can lead to mobilisation of violence.

The growing presence of young people within our casework poses challenges in assessing the evolving threat. Participation in diversionary programmes is entirely voluntary. We have seen the consequences of disengagement. We want to avoid criminalising young people if they have been exploited by extremists and reduce their entry into the wider criminal justice system.

Therefore, we welcome the introduction of Youth Diversion Orders. They will help to bridge the gap between voluntary programmes such as Prevent, and the higher threshold of prosecution in the criminal justice system. They will assist us in diverting young people away from being labelled a terrorist and further offending through carefully considered supportive and prohibitive measures as a multi-agency holistic approach.

They will help us to manage the risk at an earlier stage of the investigation, put supportive measures in place, offer swifter justice in line with Child First / Child Centred principles, and reduce the length of investigations.

We remain keen to see the introduction of legislation to access remotely stored electronic data which is absolutely critical to provide intelligence in counter-terrorism investigations and in relation to the government's work in tackling online harms.

I trust this is helpful for your work in scrutinising the Bill.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Matt Jukes', written in a cursive style.

Matt Jukes
Head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing