

Students not Suspects Policy Proposal

Contact details

Your name (Proposer of the policy)	Hadiza Adah
The name of a person who supports the policy (Secunder of the policy)	Ropafadzo Mugadza

Student Impact

Have you consulted students about your proposal? Please explain how many students you have engaged with and how.	Yes I have, I have verbally spoken to students, and spoken to the Islamic, Afro-Caribbean and Nigerian society concerning the proposal and how it would affect them.
How does your proposal impact the students at the University of Plymouth, what difference will it make to students?	It decriminalises the functioning of the Prevent act in the university and ensures the university is a safe space for students where students do not fear prosecution. It creates a space where students can freely share ideas without fear of being reported as a risk of radicalisation. It further lobby's the university to ensure they do not act extremely in their implementation of prevent. It also provides support to groups of students who may be negatively affected by the Prevent Act

Policy Proposal

The Union Notes (Facts) This section should include facts, not reflection or opinions. Please provide references where possible.

UPSU notes:

1. The government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies and 'specified authorities' – including universities – to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism' and to implement the 'Prevent' agenda¹.
2. That CTSB (Counter Terrorism and Security Bill) seeks to make the controversial the Prevent and Channel strategies statutory²
3. CTSB will criminalise ideas in a climate where students and academics will become increasingly unwilling to speak out.³
4. The Prevent agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/26/enacted>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/26/enacted>

³ <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/dec/02/anti-terror-bill-making-radical-ideas-crime-campus>

5. Under Prevent, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers.
 6. The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends. Universities UK have raised serious concerns about freedom of speech and academic freedom in their parliamentary consultation.⁴
 7. The Act further criminalises Muslims and Black people, and comes amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government.
 8. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and University and Colleges Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their conferences opposing the Act and Prevent.
- Prevent has been unanimously rejected at the March 2016 NUT (National Union of Teachers) conference. Warwick University staff condemned Prevent at their March 2016 Assembly (96 in favour, 5 against, 13 abstentions)⁵

The Union Believes (Opinions/Beliefs) This section requires reflection on the facts stated in 'The Union Notes'

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties. They include:
 - a. "A need for identity, meaning and belonging"
 - b. "A desire for political or moral change"
 - c. "Relevant mental health issues".

There is no legal definition for the terms radicalisation, extremism, non-violent extremism, radicaliser and British Values: these are just government definitions reflecting the Government's agenda.
3. That the Act could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection.
4. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.
5. That universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance: students are not suspects.
6. The implementation of the Prevent Strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists.
7. As a Charity, we as a Students' Union, are not legally bound to engage with Prevent and should seek to boycott it.
8. The Prevent Agenda infiltration into counselling and mental health counselling is concerning: practitioners are encouraged to pathologise different cultures and identities, discouraging people from seeking help knowing they could be subject to surveillance and punishment.
9. Alienating minority groups and those targeted by Prevent is actually counterproductive in the war on terror.
10. Over half of referrals to Channel are now school age children, and there were more referrals within the first 5 months of 2015 than or the whole of 2014, or any year since its introduction.

⁴<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/blog/Pages/counter-extremism-prevent-implications-universities.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/warwick-university-staff-praised-by-students-for-condemning-government-s-green-paper-and-prevent-a6926116.html>

The Union Resolves (Actions) Here you will describe the action you want to be taken, be specific.

1. To constructively challenge the university, where legally possible, on the development and implementation of the Prevent Strategy.
2. To mandate the relevant officer to work with the university towards implementing a system for reporting incidents of racism, discrimination or exclusion. This involves encouraging students to report any cases to the complaints and appeals team.
3. ~~To ensure that Islamic Societies receive the support from~~ To raise awareness of the support ordered by the UPSU Advice Centre, which is independent and confidential, to support them with disputes or discrimination cases when needed.
4. To ensure that students are able to access information on their rights, and what help is available should they be concerned about Prevent.
5. To support Islamophobia Awareness Month as an annual initiative.
6. To work with campus trade unions including UCU on combating the Prevent strategy and its implementation on campus
7. To work with the university concerning how they are choosing to engage with prevent. This involves:
 - a. Demanding publications about how the policy is operating within the University and the Students' Union. (This could be done via emails)
 - b. Includes access to materials used to train university staff.
 - c. Hold consultations with the wider student body on how this affects students.
8. To support the NUS legal challenge and research into Prevent and alternatives
9. To defend freedom of speech in line with the newly passed NUS policy.

Appendices/supporting information Please include any supporting information relevant to your motion, this could include; consideration of how you would achieve any points in 'The Union Resolves', links to news articles or online publications

The government released the prevent strategy, and whilst it may seem like a good initiative, it does not clearly state what the terms are or what radicalisation is. A lot of terms in the prevent act are not clear enough, hence it will be difficult to implement them. Students stand a chance of being criminalised for speaking up or innocent comments.

Currently, Mel Joyner (director of student services) is overseeing the implementation within the university. The SU has a good working relationship with her and we currently get updates around what approach the university is taking.

This proposal seeks to continue this relationship and strengthen it. Through carrying out the projects we already do for example Islamic Awareness week, directing student to online information and encouraging students to flag up any incidents which occur.

A lot of the resolves could be completed over emails (e.g getting information from the university on how they are implementing the prevent strategy)

Below I have included some supporting information.

Appendix 1 – Students' Unions which have passed similar "Condemn Prevent" motions:

1. London School of Economics and Political Science (LSESU)
2. Kingston
3. Bristol
4. Birmingham
5. Bradford
6. City of London
7. King's College

8. University College London (UCL)
9. Durham
10. Manchester
11. Edinburgh
12. Royal Holloway
13. Brunel
14. Goldsmiths, London
15. Heriott-Watt
16. Stirling
17. Cardiff
18. Aberdeen
19. Birkbeck, London
20. Oxford
21. Exeter
22. Sussex
23. Strathclyde
24. University of the Arts, London (SUARTS)
25. SOAS, London
26. Leeds
27. Warwick
28. University of East Anglia (UEA)
29. Leeds Beckett
30. Salford
31. Lancaster

Appendix 2 – Further reading

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/26/enacted>

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/blog/Pages/counter-extremism-prevent-implications-universities.aspx>

<http://www.preventwatch.org/cases/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35823876>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/only-4-of-people-think-david-cameronsantiextremist-policy-works-a3215961.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/when-my-school-received-counter-terrorism-prevent-training-the-only-objectors-were-white-that-says-a6957916.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03m5jh9>

Motion	UD111
Title	Defending Freedom of Speech
Submitted by	Goldsmiths Students' Union, Black Students Campaign Committee
Speech For	Goldsmiths Students' Union
Speech Against	Free
Summation	Proposer of last successful amendment

Conference believes

1. The National Union of Students has a No Platform policy which was introduced in 1974 and is voted on every year.⁵⁸
2. As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, under the Prevent Duty, the government made it mandatory for all public bodies - including schools, colleges, and universities - to have due regard for the need to be drawn into terrorism. Under government guidance, education institutions are trained to monitor the behaviour of their members, encouraging staff to raise concern over their members lives inside or outside of the institution⁵⁹
3. On October 19th 2017, Jo Johnson called on the Office for Students (OfS) to champion free speech in universities, with the aim of ensuring that “students are exposed to a wide range of issues and ideas in a safe environment without fear of censorship”.⁶⁰
4. Following this, Jo Johnson announced that the Office for Students would take a more aggressive role in securing freedom of speech in universities, including fining institutions for failing to uphold it.
5. An outrage about ‘Free Speech’ in universities has been manufactured in recent years by the government and press.
6. This often relies on crude, false connotations between diverse direct-action tactics and campaigns with ‘No Platforming’ or ‘Safe Spaces’, accusing student campaigning as the greatest threat to free speech in universities.
7. It is unclear exactly what this new ‘duty’ would add in practice, but in context it’s likely that student direct action will be targeted.

⁵⁸ https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/31475/NUS_No_Platform_Policy_information_.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1517780809&Signature=wI7rSvYIB6MkAdAI8OEGIEtoII%3D

⁵⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

⁶⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/free-speech-in-the-liberal-university>

8. Alongside this, the OfS will be enforcing the Prevent duty, to ensure that universities comply with the racist and repressive PREVENT agenda.

Conference further believes

1. The OfS's inclusion on 'freedom of speech' is geared towards inhibiting Students' Unions to create 'no platform' policies; this clashes with NUS's policy on no platforming, and the safety of our liberation group students. It is well within our democratic rights to no platform those who incite hate speech.
2. The OfS's stance on 'freedom of speech' is flawed and inconsistent with the Prevent strategy: they cannot both champion freedom of speech, and yet persist with the Prevent Duty, which creates a chilling effect on campuses, in which a number of students feel targeted and unable to speak freely and engage in democratic and normal debate, without being reported to Prevent authorities.⁶¹
3. It is unethical to monitor the activity of students - by monitoring prayer rooms, or emails, or by censoring normal student events. This leads to the censoring of students' rights to freedom of expression.
4. The OfS's stance on 'freedom of speech' is flawed and inconsistent with the Prevent strategy.
5. The University of Exeter and UCLAN intervened to cancel student-run events that were intended to raise awareness about Palestinian human rights because of links to Prevent.⁶²
6. Muslims are fifty times more likely to be referred to Prevent than a non-Muslim. This is not conducive to an equal society, in which Islamophobia is increasing and Muslim communities are targeted.⁶³
7. Links to Prevent also led The University of Westminster to install CCTVs inside their prayer rooms without consultation. This made women using the room feel uncomfortable with taking their headscarves off in a safe space.⁶⁴
8. Free Speech is one of a number of rights to hold power to account and is inseparable from the right to organise and the right to protest. Therefore it must be defended and exercised 'from below'.
9. Cases invoked by the government/press as threatening free speech on campuses include 'Decolonise' campaigns, pro-Palestine protesting, trigger warnings and antiracist/antifascist campaigning.
10. There is indeed an attack on Free Speech in universities - it comes from the state cracking down on student political organising, and the likes of PREVENT.

⁶¹ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/ff-ofs-all-about-freedom-speech-policy-must-least-be-consistent>

⁶² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/27/universities-free-speech-row-halting-pro-palestinian-events>

⁶³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/07/criticism-prevent-based-facts-myths-170703072558455.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/preventing-free-thought-on-campus/18062#.Wnc46tLjIU>

11. Student events have come under heavy restrictions and censorship under the Prevent duty. This includes demands for security, monitoring or vetting guests.
12. Direct action has a proud tradition in the student movement that we must defend. Universities should not be made to police students' action, nor should SUs ever be complicit in doing so.

Conference resolves to

1. To mandate the Vice President Union Development to support Students Unions to develop a 'Know Your Rights' toolkit, with legal briefings on student rights and freedoms as enshrined in legislation, including our rights of freedom of expression and freedom of speech
2. To continue the campaign against the Prevent duty, which curtails all our rights and freedoms
3. To work with other unions, including UCU, to lobby the government to review and repeal the Prevent duty.
4. Lobby for an end to the OfS' 'Free Speech' duty, as government bodies cannot be trusted to defend Free Speech.
5. Campaign against any future laws or policies that stifle or criminalise direct and disruptive action.
6. Continue to campaign for the abolition of PREVENT and the Prevent duty.
7. Campaign for an end to extra restrictions and bureaucracy being applied to events and student activities under the Prevent duty.

EXTRACT OF THE MINUTES 1ST MAY 2018

Students Not Suspects
<p>Hadiza Adah – VP International & Outreach explained that this is renewal of a policy that has lapsed.</p> <p>The speech against was waived.</p> <p>James Lord – Chair of Accountability Board, noted that the Accountability Board had also agreed that the policy should be renewed, however, they would have liked to have seen it updated with current information.</p> <p>Hadiza Adah explained that she had spoken to the university staff involved in Prevent and they said that whilst everything is monitored in accordance with their legal obligation, the university don't actively do anything.</p> <p>Maja Smith – VP Education questioned that if nothing has changed in the previous two year period, does the policy not need to be amended to reflect that?</p> <p>James Warren – VP Welfare made a comment on resolves point three 'To ensure that Islamic Societies receive the support from UPSU Advice Centre, which is independent and confidential, to</p>

support them with disputes or discrimination cases when needed.’ And noted that the UPSU Advice Centre supports all students.

Goda Cegialyte – Part-time LGBT+ Officer suggested that the wording could be changed to say something about resources being actively available for students.

Hadiza changed resolves point three to read ‘To raise awareness of the support offered by the UPSU Advice Centre...’

Sarah Davey – Deputy CEO and Director of Membership Services noted that the Gina Connelly, CEO had asked her to share information regarding the legal framework in which UPSU has to operate. As a registered charity UPSU does have a legal duty to comply with regulation provided by the Charity Commission. Trustees of the organisation, of which all the Sabbatical Officers are, have legal responsibilities and obligations regarding how they monitor and manage some issues that buffer with Prevent, especially those regarding managing risk and External Speakers. In order for UPSU to fulfil these legal obligations the organisation does need to ensure that staff are trained and that governance processes are adhered to.

Lowri Jones – President added that there will be a new university staff lead for Prevent and a live policy would help protect students against any change of heart in the way things are currently managed.

Hadiza Adah noted that she had added in resolves point two; ‘To mandate the relevant officer to work with the university towards implementing a system for reporting incidents of racism, discrimination or exclusion. This involves encouraging students to report any cases to the complaints and appeals team.’ The aim of this is to encourage students to report any incidents and for Sabbatical Officers to support that, as needed. Students may not always be aware of how report something or maybe unsure if it’s appropriate.

Alex Doyle – VP Activities, noted that reporting mechanisms are already in place and he thought it was unclear of what was being asked. Alex also added that a breakdown of what complaints were/are would be helpful.

The Chair reminded Union Council that they do not need to vote if they feel that the information presented is inadequate, a decision can be deferred.

Maja Smith – VP Education, questioned how many students had been consulted about this, the proposal noted that a number of societies had been contacted but how many students does that equate to? Alex Doyle – VP Activities, noted that the numbers are minimal for the societies in question.

Lowri Jones – President suggested that Hadiza be actioned with providing additional information after the meeting

Action: Hadiza Adah to provide information regarding the reporting of incidents of racism, discrimination or exclusion

The Chair called for a vote on the amended motion

For: 16

Against: 0

Abstentions:2

As the meeting was not quorate members that were not present will have the opportunity to vote via email after the meeting

For: 22

Against: 0

Abstentions:2