



Department
for Education

September 2020

FE/HE Prevent News: London

Your monthly Prevent update for Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) providers in London.



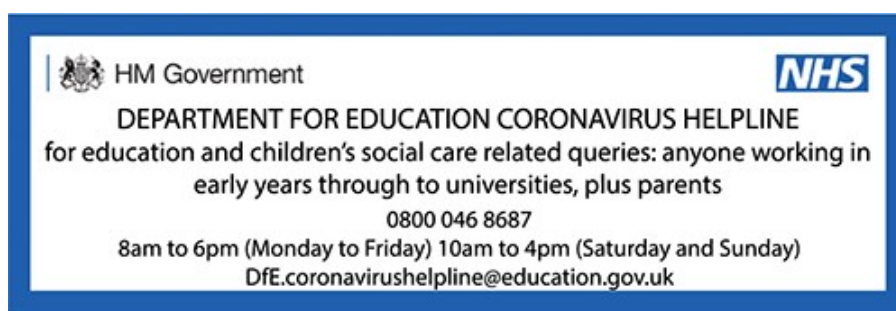
Dear FE and HE providers,

September is now upon us meaning that class is back in session, new stationary has been bought and shoes have been shined. In the Fisher household we'll be rearranging our home office - also known as the corner of our living room - for the start of a fresh term. We managed to visit Leeds to see family, socially distanced of course, and remarkably they recognised us both despite one of us growing a beard during the work from home period. Those who have attended recent network meetings will know the bearded person is not me.

Conspiracy theories have been particularly prevalent during the Covid-19 lockdown and beyond, so we bring you a new regular addition to the monthly digest: Conspiracy Corner. There are many conspiracy theories spanning large time frames and covering a huge variance of topics so each month we will delve into one theory, explaining the basics, any underlying ideologies or extremist rhetoric, and providing links to useful reading on the topic. Hopefully you find this useful, so do feedback to us if there's a particular conspiracy theory you'd like to be featured in future digests.

We're aware that as more learners and staff return to your institutions you'll be busier than ever, but we would still like to offer our support if you require it. We're available with our usual roster of support methods including pre-referral conversations, policy overview, Prevent training, and more so do get in touch with any questions or queries you may have.

The DfE Coronavirus helpline is still active and information is below:



We hope everyone is safe and well,

Jennie and Jake
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Sector specific information

Further Education

For those who wish to take part in the Prevent Train-the-Trainer Training who have not been contacted to ascertain their availability previously, please do email Jennie if you'd like to take part. The session will be running in early October via Teams.

Hopefully everyone saw the updates to KCSIE that were linked in the previous digest, as they have now come into force the updated document is linked [here](#) again for ease. Ofsted have also updated their plans for autumn and this is available [here](#).

The next FE College Network will be taking place virtually on October 6.

The next Independent Learning Provider Network will be taking place virtually on October 8.

Please email Jennie if you would like to attend your appropriate network meeting.

Higher Education

Thank you again to those who attended the London HE Prevent network meeting. Minutes have been distributed, please get in touch if you have not received them or have any questions. Details of the next meeting will be sent in due course.

The Office for Students have opened a call for evidence on the topic of "Digital Teaching and Learning in English Higher Education during the coronavirus pandemic." They are keen to gather case studies, views, and perspectives to hear about what worked well, and what worked less well, to learn lessons about the potential, and the limitations, of the online mode of delivery at scale. The link to respond is [here](#), and we'd encourage as many providers as possible to be involved. The deadline to respond is October 14.

New Prevent Videos

The Home Office have released some new videos on the subject of Prevent that we would highly recommend are watched and shared and can even be integrated effectively into Prevent training, briefings and communications.

The Prevent video in it's entirety is available at this link: [Prevent Intro](#)

There are also short edits being released on social media by the Home Office which focus on different areas, the education related video is available on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



Conspiracy Corner

We're starting Conspiracy Corner with a very current conspiracy theory that has moved from the online space into the real world, QAnon. To begin to dissect QAnon we must go back to 2017 and a series of anonymous posts on 4Chan by an individual named "Q".



"Q" claimed to have high level security clearance within the US Government and

proceeded to make a number of cryptic posts on 4Chan around the Mueller report, claiming that instead of investigating suspected collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign it was an investigation by Donald Trump into a group of global elites and their links to child sex trafficking and satanic rituals involving the children. The idea was that Trump would expose the elites involved and arrest and shame them publicly. There have been multiple false alarms with rumours circulating that people such as Hilary Clinton and Oprah had been arrested, only for this to be false information. This does not deter the followers of QAnon who believe that "The Storm" is coming and any delay is simply due to the power of the elites working against Trump. The posts were open to interpretation and those who interpreted the clues or "breadcrumbs" began the theory which quickly gained a cult following online.

By 2020 the theory evolved and migrated from the cult online space to the mainstream and into real life situations. On August 22 this year a group of people marched in London, Leeds, and other major UK cities with banners that both stated 'Save the Children', 'March for the Children' but also some QAnon related slogans such as "WWG1WGA" which stands for "Where We Go One, We Go All." This group also protested outside Buckingham Palace shouting "paedophiles" and use the very real issue of child sexual exploitation to legitimise their actions. Some people who protested were unaware of links to QAnon, whereas others posted warnings on shared Facebook groups stating that the focus should be on the children when protesting to ensure links to QAnon did not delegitimise their worries.

In May 2019 the FBI assessed QAnon to be a domestic terror threat due in part to the actions of some who adhere to the theory committing or planning to commit criminal acts. There have been multiple arrests in the US related to QAnon ranging from an armoured van blocking a major road to hold a QAnon related sign demanding the release of a report, to a plot to kill Joe Biden among other violent acts. Supporting QAnon is not proscribed or illegal in the UK and believing the theory is not a crime or reason for a referral alone, but it is worthwhile keeping an eye out for any escalation into the criminal space.

Hope not Hate produced an article around QAnon and the rise of the conspiracy theory in the UK which can be found [here](#). The BBC have also produced a video around QAnon available [here](#) and a blog linking the QAnon theory to the current Covid situation [here](#). Of course if you'd like any further information on the topic please don't hesitate to get in contact with Jake or Jennie.

New Guidance

We'd like to draw your attention to some new guidance released very recently from both the Office for Students for higher education providers and the Department for Education for Further Education Providers and schools.

For our FE and schools colleagues we [link here](#) a briefing note from the Educate Against Hate site for senior leaders, teachers and safeguarding leads at schools and further education providers on how extremists are using COVID-19 to promote disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories. This non-statutory advice from the Department for Education has been produced to provide a short summary of the extremist response to COVID-19, highlighting the additional radicalisation risks for children and young people and suggested actions for settings to take.

The Office for Students have released a [Q&A document](#) which we have alerted providers to when it was released last week, however we are also linking again here for reference.

Do get in contact if you need any further assistance from myself or Jake in relation to the above guidance.

Prevent Coffee Morning Meetings

We're aware that due to the Covid-19 situation that although our network meetings have been continuing the element of relationship building between those who attend has been missing, and that this is something valued by attendees.

In order to fill that gap we would like to propose short coffee morning meetings of around 30 minutes and for up to four attendees who operate within similar institutions. The idea would be to have a chat about Prevent and hopefully build those relationships through virtual means. Though we unfortunately cannot provide the coffee on this occasion, we can instead provide all logistical support so that the only thing you would need to do is attend. We can create the groups, set up the video call, and also provide a few short starter questions for discussion. As September and early October are very hectic times, we are aiming to organise those calls for late October and early November.

If this is something you'd be interested in being a part of please email jennie.fisher@education.gov.uk to be added to the list.

What is Bitchute?

You may have heard of Bitchute, a video sharing website similar to YouTube that was created in 2017. When it first launched it was advertised by its creator as an alternative to mainstream platforms which he perceived as having "increased levels of censorship."

Bitchute differs from mainstream video sharing such as YouTube in many ways, one being that there is no reliance on advertising for income. Users can instead send money to video creators directly, though Bitchute was banned from Paypal in 2018 at the same time Tommy Robinson and Alex Jones were also banned from the payment platform. In August 2020 Twitter began to block tweets that linked to Bitchute. Although Bitchute originally advertised itself as being a peer-to-peer sharing site, some investigations have found that the majority of videos are hosted directly on Bitchute itself.

Why is Bitchute relevant to Prevent? In July Hope Not Hate produced a report into Bitchute content including the levels of moderation on the site. They found many videos that could be considered terrorist propaganda, videos that incite violence, and a number of videos that are in support of proscribed terrorist groups. The report also found that Bitchute hosted videos that spread misinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic, including the [Plandemic](#) documentary which promoted conspiracy theories on the topic of the pandemic while having what could be considered to be an anti-vaccination agenda. That report can be read in full at [this link](#).

Simply accessing Bitchute is not a cause for concern in itself, despite the potential for the viewing of extremist content. A concern involving the site should be considered in context, and online safety is something that should be reinforced to ensure learners know what concerning content looks like and who to approach with a concern.

Your Welfare

With so many changes happening and a return to the office for some, it's still important to take some time to relax where possible and to take note of how your mental health is doing.

Returning to the office may be daunting and may make some people feel anxious, and this is a completely normal response in these circumstances. Keeping an eye on your mental health is vital, and if you feel you need more assistance then approaching your GP is often the first step. MIND have a useful guide around [how to speak to your GP about mental health](#) that you may find helpful, or you may

know a learner who would benefit from the guidance.

There is also a NHS Directory of mental health charity helplines and websites available at [this link](#) which may prove useful for more targeted support. There is also a page dedicated to helplines for the LGBTQ+ community at [this link](#).

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