**MERTON CHANNEL PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. **Purpose**
   1. Channel forms a key part of the national Prevent strategy. Channel is an identification and intervention safeguarding multi-agency process, providing support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
   2. Channel seeks to deliver prompt and tailored work in its conduct of vulnerability assessments, information gathering and when delivering and organising support packages. Details of the type of support that could be provided can be found on page 17 of the Channel Duty guidance 2015[[1]](#footnote-1).
   3. Panels must as a minimum consider health as an alternative form of support where Channel support is not appropriate.
   4. The Channel process is managed by the local authority, who will chair the panel, in conjunction with the police, on behalf of the Home Office.
   5. The Channel panel is the principal decision-making and co-ordinating body for the Channel Programme in Merton.
   6. The panel’s purpose is to provide decision-making and support to all staff involved in delivering the Merton Channel work, including referrals and interventions.
   7. Decisions and actions made by the panel will be based on discussion and input of all core members with the final decision resting with the Chair. These decisions will be recorded in the minutes.
   8. The panel has the ability to work outside scheduled meetings, in response to urgent or critical incidents.
   9. The Channel panel chair will give consideration to the risks and vulnerabilities identified in the local CTLP when assessing all cases, and the police and the chair should share critical information from the CTLP with the panel to enable sound decisions to be made on cases.
2. **Membership and Frequency of the Meetings**
   1. The Channel Panel will meet at least monthly although, where necessary, an emergency meeting can be convened if the individual’s vulnerabilities require prompt consideration. Minutes will be taken at all meetings by the local authority, who will circulate to all members.
   2. In line with the Channel Duty guidance, as a minimum, the membership will consist of the following:
      * Local Authority Channel chair; and
      * Channel Police Practitioner.
   3. Other members should be invited where they have input to the cases to be discussed. These may be standing members of the panel as determined by the panel Chair, and invited each time. These may include, but are not be limited to:
      * + Local Authority Prevent Lead (where applicable);

* NHS;
* Social workers;
* Schools, further education colleges and universities;
* Youth offending services;
* Directors of children’s and adult’s services;
* Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Safeguarding Adult Boards;
* Local authority safeguarding managers (adult and/or children);
* Local authority Troubled Families Teams;
* Home Office Immigration (Immigration Enforcement, UK Visas & Immigration);
* Border Force;
* Housing;
* Prisons; and
* Probation.
  1. Other persons may be invited to either join the panel, or attend on an invitation basis to offer specialist or specific advice.
  2. It is the responsibility of Channel panel members to nominate deputies to attend the meeting in case of absence. Members and any deputies sent in their absence must have enough seniority to be able to make operational decisions for their organisation.
  3. The meeting will be chaired by the Equality and Community Cohesion Officer. All people attending a panel will agree to sign a confidentiality declaration at each meeting.

1. **Secretariat**
   1. The Local Authority will perform all secretarial functions which include:
      * Creating an agenda and circulating this to members at least two working days before the meeting;
      * Minuting the meeting and circulating these to core members and relevant shareholders in good time;
      * Maintaining a detailed tracker of cases and ensuring these trackers accurately reflect the minutes; and
      * Ensuring the reasons underlying actions (including exiting cases is clearly recorded).
2. **Meetings**
   1. Membership will be reviewed every 6 months.
   2. Unless specified otherwise, the Channel Panel will meet monthly at Merton’s Civic Centre.
   3. There may be extenuating circumstances when this meeting needs to be cancelled or rescheduled. In place of a physical meeting, members will be expected to provide virtual updates.
   4. Emergency meetings may be held outside of stated times if required.
3. **Accountability**

5.1 Members are expected to prepare by reading the agenda in advance of the meeting.

5.2 Members are expected to complete their actions in good time and to report outcomes of their actions to the panel.

5.4 The local authority chair and police are expected to communicate between meetings with updates on developments in cases and discussion of new referrals.

5.5 Police will own the terrorism risk and the local authority will own the safeguarding risk associated to all referrals and cases discussed.

1. **Process**
   1. Once the referral has been assessed by Channel police to not be malicious misguided or misinformed, information sharing can begin, pending Information Sharing Request Forms.
   2. Channel members are expected to respond to information sharing requests promptly (within 5-10 working days in line with the Channel Duty guidance 2015).
   3. Channel police will usually carry out initial face-to-face interactions with individual), will complete the Vulnerability Assessments (in conjunction with the chair) and will organise the logistics of Channel interventions.
   4. The Local Authority will facilitate all liaisons with local authority departments.
   5. The Channel Panel will review the cases for any individuals who have received any form of Channel support, at 6 and 12 months after exiting from Channel[[2]](#footnote-2). Channel police practitioners will drive this process, updating the Local Authority Chair on upcoming cases to be reviewed.
2. **Information Sharing**

**Key Principle:** Partners may consider sharing personal information with each other for *Prevent* purposes, subject to a case-by-case basis assessment which considers whether the informed consent of the individual can be obtained and the proposed sharing being necessary, proportionate and lawful.

* 1. The overriding principles for sharing information are necessity and proportionality. It should be confirmed by those holding information that to conduct the work in question it is necessary to share the information they hold. Only the information required to have the desired outcome should be shared, and only to those partners with whom it is necessary to share it to achieve the objective. Key to determining the necessity and proportionality of sharing information will be the professional judgement of the risks to an individual or the public. Consideration should also be given to whether discussion of a case is possible with anonymised information, for example, referring to “the young person” without the need to give the individual’s name, address or any other information which might identify them.
  2. Each case should be judged on its own merit, and the following questions should be considered when sharing information:
* what information you are intending to pass;
* to whom you are intending to pass the information;
* why you are intending to pass the information (i.e. with what expected outcome); and
* the legal basis on which the information is to be passed.
  1. The default should be to consider seeking the consent of the individual to share information. There will, of course, be circumstances in which seeking the consent of the individual will not be possible, because it will prejudice delivery of the intended outcome, and there may be gateways or exemptions which permit sharing to take place without consent. If you cannot seek or obtain consent, or consent is refused, you cannot share personal information without satisfying one of the gateway or exemption conditions. Compliance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and Human Rights Act (HRA) are significantly simplified by having the subject’s consent. The Information Commissioner has indicated that consent should be informed and unambiguous, particularly in the case of sensitive personal information. If consent is sought, the individual should understand how their information will be used, and for what purpose.
  2. The gateway and exemption conditions that can be used to allow information sharing are provided in detail in **Annex A of the Channel Duty guidance 2015: Sharing information with partners[[3]](#footnote-3)**.
  3. The data that panel members may be expected to share about an individual might include (but may not be limited to):
* Demographics (name, date of birth, gender, address, ethnicity)
* Offending history
* Living Arrangements
* Family and personal relationships
* Statutory education
* Neighbourhood
* Lifestyle
* Substance misuse
* Emotional and mental health
* Perceptions of self
* Thinking and behaviour
* Attitudes to engagement in relevant activity
* Motivation to change
* Cultural factors

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Channel support is deemed to be any form of support from any panel partner and includes but is not limited to Intervention Provider services. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Channel Duty Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)