

# **ANTI-PREVENT**

## **PROBLEM/IDEA**

The government's Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies – including universities – to 'Prevent' people being drawn into terrorism' and to implement the 'Prevent' agenda.

The 'Prevent' agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' agenda has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims. Additionally, under 'Prevent' [Socialism, anti-fascism and anti-abortion are all on the 'Prevent' list of warning signs.](#)

Under 'Prevent', [some lecturers across the UK have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for 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.](#) The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.

[The Act further criminalises Muslims, Black people, LGBTQ+ community and allies, socialists, anti-capitalists and other minorities.](#) This comes amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government.

'As a system, 'Prevent' is also flawed; the vast majority of people reported under its category do not present any threat and the referrals require no further action.

Amnesty UK warns of 'Prevent's negative effects on human rights in their ['Prevent' report.](#)

## **WHY SHOULD HWUNION DO IT?**

Islamophobia is on the rise across Europe, it is often [state-sponsored](#) and [legitimised by the mainstream media.](#) The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise, and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.

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.

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. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance.

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.

That the [NUS](#) and [UCU](#) have both passed motions at their conferences opposing the Act and 'Prevent'. As a Charity, we as a Union are not legally bound to engage with 'Prevent' and should seek to boycott it.

## ***WHAT SHOULD HWUNION DO?***

Oppose 'PREVENT' and have a statement confirming our position.

The Union Officers will not engage with the 'Prevent' strategy or implement the proposals of the Act and will boycott it as far as legally possible. (ie. Not take part in sessions or discussions where 'Prevent' aims to be practiced).

Work with campus Trade Unions on combating the 'Prevent' strategy and its implementation on campus.

Lobby the university to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with 'Prevent' and other similar initiatives. This involves:

- The FTO team requesting the university to publicise how their 'Prevent' policy is operating within the university each year.
- Provide access to materials used to train staff and students.
- Requesting they regularly consult with the student body regarding how 'Prevent' this affects students.