



## LUTON

### Factsheet Multi-Stakeholder-Collaboration Team Profile

#### Luton risk landscape

Luton's risk landscape remains complex and enduring with multifaceted threats. It ranks consistently high in national security counter terrorism threat risk assessments. The town's local counter terrorism profile, primarily sourced from counter terrorism policing and national security intelligence agencies, demonstrates a notable presence of various extremist elements, with Islamist extremism remaining the enduring threat followed by growth in extreme right wing and also featuring elements of extreme misogyny, far-right ideologies and hate crime as high-harm factors. Additionally, Luton has other contextual challenges which at times overlap in relation to serious youth violence, county lines / gangs, drug dealing, and organised crime groups, making it an attractive recruiting ground for extremists and other forms of exploitation. Since August 2021, Luton has received a disproportionately high number of asylum seekers within the region and in response had several asylum accommodation sites set-up by the Home Office, which has made the town vulnerable to targeting of right-wing activity. In summary, the extremist risk landscape in the town comprises a mix of enduring risk from Islamist extremism, with right-wing Prevent cases on the rise. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, evidence-based approach with key statutory partners and various stakeholders with a focus on both safeguarding against harms of extremism and prevention efforts in addressing vulnerabilities to radicalisation.

#### The MSC's primary focus

The MSC's primary focus is to address the continued presence of established and resilient extremist networks and emerging threats / risks, while Luton's prevention work revolves around adopting an evidence-based approach to address and mitigate the risk of extremism. A key objective is to comprehensively describe the local contextual risk picture, especially at the community level, where concerns about extremism may not be adequately understood nor addressed by national government agencies. Besides the above-mentioned foci, notably, their prevention work addresses risk factors for the town stemming from right-wing activity targeting asylum accommodation sites and the risk of asylum seekers being targeted by extremist recruiters. Additionally, they stress the importance of engagement to understand local tensions and addressing community grievances, particularly anti-minority ones. Overall, the city's primary focus in prevention work is to create a safer and more resilient community, including online, by identifying vulnerabilities, engaging with at-risk individuals, and tackling various forms of extremism and exploitation through evidence-based approaches and community involvement. There has been a national and local increase observed in online radicalisation as a vulnerability factor especially more prevalent during and post the Covid pandemic.

#### Stakeholders involved and coordinating body

The MSC collaborates within its local authority and relevant departments to implement prevention strategies. This includes portfolio holders responsible for community safety and social justice. Law enforcement agencies, including the police, are close partners who share intelligence and coordinate efforts to prevent extremism. Local schools, colleges, and universities are key partners in the prevention work. They play a crucial role in identifying and supporting at-risk individuals. Social services agencies are involved in providing support to vulnerable individuals. CSOs and community-based groups are essential in engaging with the community and providing support and services to those at risk. Specialised police teams dedicated to preventing extremism are actively engaged in the city's prevention efforts.

Local Prevent Teams are responsible for coordinating and overseeing the prevention work, ensuring that various stakeholders are involved and collaborate effectively. Lastly, the city is a Home Office Prevent funded area and benefits from national-level resources and support in its prevention work albeit with the expectation to act within legislative framework of the national Prevent Duty.

### **Further stakeholders to be involved**

While Luton is actively engaging with a range of stakeholders in its current prevention work, there may be a desire to include additional stakeholders in the future to further strengthen their efforts. The city's prevention work is dynamic and responsive to emerging challenges and needs. Key gaps the local authority is mindful of remain around meaningful dialogue with the diverse communities of Luton on key risks faced by the town but overshadowed by attitudes towards the policy to prevent vulnerable individuals from being drawn into terrorism. Potential stakeholders they might consider including in the future could include religious and faith-based organisations. Engaging with religious leaders and institutions can be valuable in promoting tolerance, countering extremist narratives, and fostering community cohesion. Expanding partnerships with local youth organisations, women's networks, and community groups can provide additional avenues for outreach and support to at-risk individuals, especially young people. Collaborating with mental health professionals and services can help address the mental well-being of individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Given the significant role of online platforms in radicalisation, partnering with social media and tech companies for content moderation and reporting mechanisms may be considered. Involving local businesses can contribute to community resilience and support economic opportunities for vulnerable individuals. Strengthening ties with the legal and justice system can enhance the city's ability to address extremist threats through legal means. Engaging with cultural and arts groups could promote diversity and inclusivity and counter extremist ideologies through creative and cultural expressions. Exploring collaborations with national and international organisations and agencies could provide access to resources, best practices, and a broader perspective on countering extremism.

### **Major contribution of the MSC to the prevention and countering of violent extremism?**

Educational institutions and social services have been instrumental in identifying individuals at risk of radicalisation, enabling early intervention and support to divert them from extremist paths. Law enforcement agencies, in coordination with local authorities, have facilitated the sharing of critical intelligence and information, leading to the disruption of potential extremist activities. CSOs and community organisations have actively engaged with the community, fostering trust, and providing resources and programs that promote resilience against extremist ideologies. Prevent coordinators and prevent police teams have been at the forefront of developing and implementing preventive measures and strategies, including awareness campaigns and interventions. Engagement of stakeholders with policymakers and local authorities has led to the integration of prevention efforts into mainstream policies and practices, ensuring a holistic approach to countering extremism.

### **How has participation in icommit impacted the MSC's work?**

Participation has had a transformative impact on the city's work in preventing and countering violent extremism. It has provided valuable resources, knowledge, and best practices, enabling the city to enhance its capacity and strategies for countering extremism. The project has facilitated cross-sector collaboration and the sharing of innovative approaches, ultimately strengthening the city's resilience against extremist threats.

### **Future focus**

Luton aims to further expand their network of stakeholders, to secure better buy-in from faith-based organisations, mental health services, and community groups, to create a more comprehensive and inclusive approach in addressing vulnerabilities to radicalisation. Additionally, the city will prioritise on-

going engagement with the community, particularly women's networks, and elected members, fostering resilience, and enhancing its ability to address emerging extremist challenges, particularly in the digital realm. Women are crucial as parents, safeguarders and building local knowledge on harms of extremism.

### **Piece of advice for other MSCs**

Cities new to MSC should start with a comprehensive risk assessment primarily of the local extremism and counter terrorism landscape and further include developing a broader understanding of contextual harms / challenges and core vulnerabilities impacting different communities. The importance of multi-agency working and establishment of meaningful collaborative partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders should be prioritised, including educational institutions, social care services, law enforcement, community, and voluntary organisations. Building trust and cooperation among these entities is crucial for a coordinated response. The MSC should stay informed about emerging trends, better information as well as best practices with relevant agencies, and be prepared to develop and adjust localised strategies together.

GET IN  
TOUCH  
WITH US

Violence Prevention Network/icommit project

Alt-Reinickendorf 25

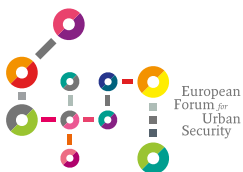
D-13407 Berlin

+49 (0)30 407 55 122

icommit@violence-prevention-network.de

[www.multiagencycooperation.eu](http://www.multiagencycooperation.eu)

[www.twitter.com/VPNDeradINT](https://www.twitter.com/VPNDeradINT)



modus | zad



icommit is funded by the “Internal Security Fund – Police” of the European Union.

The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.