

Police Scotland

Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

Overview

This publication contains information on the number of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland over the period April 2020 to March 2021, due to concerns that they were vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent works through identifying individuals who may be at risk of being exploited by violent extremist narratives and drawn into terrorism; assessing the nature and the extent of their vulnerability; and, where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. A concerted effort has been made to ensure that the preventative, rights-based approach taken in Scotland is balanced, proportionate and aligned to existing safeguarding procedures.

Key results

In the year ending 31 March 2021, **55 individuals were referred to Prevent in Scotland**. This is a decrease of 45% compared to the previous year (100 in the year ending March 2020).

Of the 55 referrals, **25 (45%) were deemed suitable for Prevent Case Management (PCM)**. Thirty (55%) individuals were deemed not suitable for PCM following an initial assessment, including 10 (18%) individuals who required no further action and exited the process, and 20 (36%) individuals who were referred onwards.

The **police made the most referrals (24; 44%)**, followed by the education sector (10; 18%). The vast majority of individuals referred to Prevent were **male (52; 95%)**, and individuals **aged 21-30** made up the largest proportion of those referred (17; 31%).

The **most common type of concern related to right-wing extremism (25; 45%)**. The proportion of referrals related to right-wing extremism has risen over time (from 22% in 2017/18 to 45% in 2020/21), while the proportion of referrals related to Islamist extremism has fallen (from 37% in 2017/18 to 13% in 2020/21).

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1. Introduction

1.1. Coverage

This publication contains information on the number of individuals that were referred to Prevent in Scotland from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. All figures provided are for this period except where otherwise stated.

For the majority of the reporting period, 'lockdown' restrictions were in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. While the level of restrictions in place varied over the year, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the total number of referrals to Prevent, the sectors from which referrals originated, and the age breakdown of referrals.

More information on the impact that COVID-19 is likely to have had on referrals to Prevent in Scotland during 2020/21 is provided in Section 4.

Prevent is a strand of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorist Strategy known as '**CONTEST**'. The purpose of Prevent is to 'stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'.

For more information about CONTEST and Prevent in the UK and Scotland, please see the following publications: [Prevent Strategy](#), [Prevent duty guidance for Scotland](#), [Prevent Multi-Agency Panel Duty Guidance](#) and [2018 CONTEST strategy](#).

1.2. The Prevent referral process

1.2.1. Referral and assessment

Prevent referrals are often made in the first instance by individuals who come into contact with those who appear to be vulnerable to radicalisation. Referrals come from a wide range of sources including: local authorities, schools, colleges, universities, health bodies, prisons, and the police. These organisations are subject to a statutory duty through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to include consideration of the need to safeguard people from being drawn into terrorism in their day-to-day work. Staff should receive training to help them identify people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and what to do about it.

On receipt of a Prevent referral, Police Scotland's Prevent Delivery Unit undertakes an initial assessment of vulnerability before agreeing the appropriate response with partners. Where a vulnerable individual is identified as requiring support via Prevent Case Management (PCM), multi-agency partners will come together as part of a Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP)¹ to discuss what support they could provide which would benefit the individual concerned.

¹ Previously known as Prevent Professional Concerns (PPC) Panels.

1.2.2. Providing support and leaving the programme

Support may include signposting the individual to other professionals and may also include an opportunity to engage with a Home Office approved Intervention Provider (IP), who can provide a counter narrative to challenge the extreme ideology held by the individual. Or, as is often the case, the emphasis may be on identifying the individual's broader support needs and providing access to mainstream support services.

Safeguarding the individual remains the priority but participation in activities that result from a PMAP remain voluntary. Consent is required to be given by the individual (or their parent/guardian in the case of a child) in advance of their involvement in any activities or actions that are recommended. Where the individual does not consent to engage with Prevent, alternative measures are considered by the multi-agency panel, including whether the individual should leave the programme or enter police-led PCM².

PMAP meetings are held regularly to review the progress of the individual. If the panel agrees that an individual's vulnerability has been successfully reduced or managed then the individual exits the process. After an individual has exited the process, their progress is reviewed at 6 and 12 months following closure of the case. In the event that further concerns arise as a result of these reviews the individual can re-enter the process and receive further support.

² Police-led PCM covers the management of individuals, groups or institutions that are not suitable for PMAP but which have identified Prevent-related issues requiring support or mitigation.

2. People referred to Prevent in Scotland in 2020/21

This section presents information on the number of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland in 2020/21 due to concerns that they were vulnerable to radicalisation. It includes the sector of referral and information on how individuals were assessed and supported, including those who required no further action, referral to another sector or support through Prevent Case Management (PCM).

Note that figures for the 2020/21 period are likely to have been impacted by COVID-19, so trends in the data should be interpreted with caution. More information on the impact of COVID-19 on referrals to Prevent in 2020/21 is provided in Section 4.

2.1. Referrals to Prevent

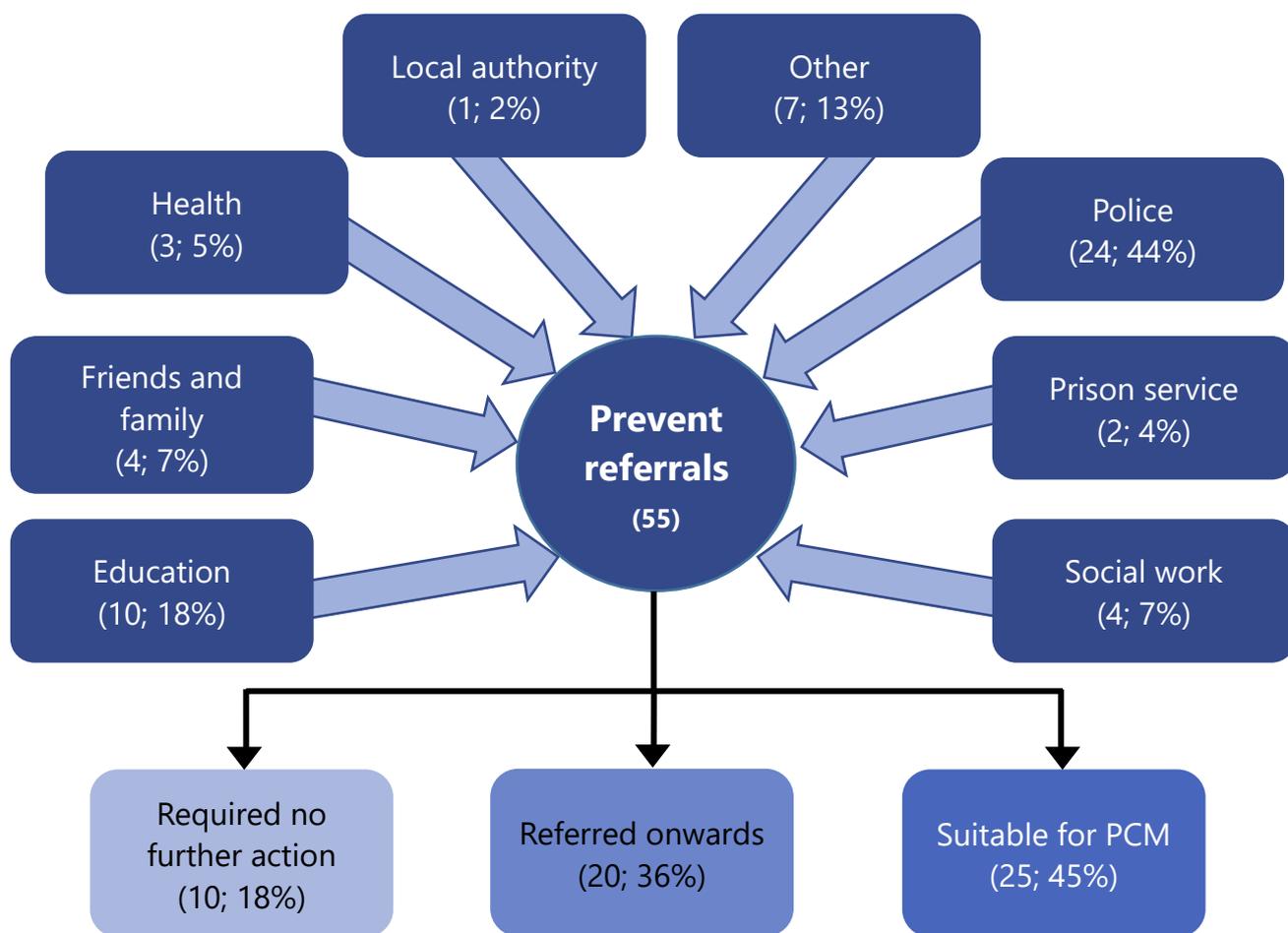
In the year ending March 2021, 55 individuals were referred to Prevent in Scotland. Of these 55 individuals, 5 had been referred to Prevent previously.

The police made the most referrals (24; 44%), followed by the education sector (10; 18%). The 10 referrals from the education sector included 9 referrals from schools and 1 referral from Further/Higher Education.

Of the 55 Prevent referrals in Scotland, 25 (45%) were deemed suitable for PCM. Thirty (55%) individuals were deemed not suitable for PCM following an initial assessment, including 10 (18%) individuals who required no further action and exited the process, and 20 (36%) individuals who were referred onwards (Figure 1)³.

³ Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Figure 1: Sector of referrals and action from assessment⁴



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

2.1.1. Individuals not suitable for PCM (30)

Of the 10 individuals that required no further action and exited the process, 9 were deemed not to be vulnerable to radicalisation following an initial assessment. For one individual, the vulnerability was reduced or managed.

Of the 20 individuals that were referred onwards, 13 were deemed to not be vulnerable to radicalisation following an initial assessment. The vulnerability was reduced or managed for 5 individuals, while for 2 individuals the vulnerability was not reduced or managed, but other safeguarding procedures were considered more appropriate than PCM.

Of the 13 individuals referred onwards that were assessed as not being vulnerable to radicalisation, 6 were referred to the health sector, 2 were referred to the police, 2 were referred to social services,

⁴ The 'other' sector includes referrals from the government, military, or a partner agency.

1 was referred to the prison sector, 1 was referred to the education sector and 1 was referred to the housing sector.

Of the 5 individuals referred onwards for whom the vulnerability was reduced or managed, 2 were referred to the education sector, 1 was referred to the police, 1 was referred to social services and 1 was referred to the health sector.

Of the 2 individuals for whom other safeguarding procedures were considered more appropriate than PCM, 1 was referred to the police and 1 was referred to social work.

2.1.2. Individuals suitable for PCM (25)

Of the 25 individuals identified as suitable for PCM, 22 (88%) were identified as suitable for a multi-agency led panel, while 3 (12%) were identified as suitable for a police-led panel.

Eighteen (72%) of the 25 individuals have now exited PCM, while for 7 (28%) PCM is ongoing.

Of the 18 individuals identified as suitable for PCM who have now exited the process, the vulnerability was reduced or managed for 14 individuals. One individual was deemed not to be vulnerable to radicalisation, while two individuals relocated to other parts of the UK, and were therefore transferred to different Prevent units. The other individual did not consent to PCM.

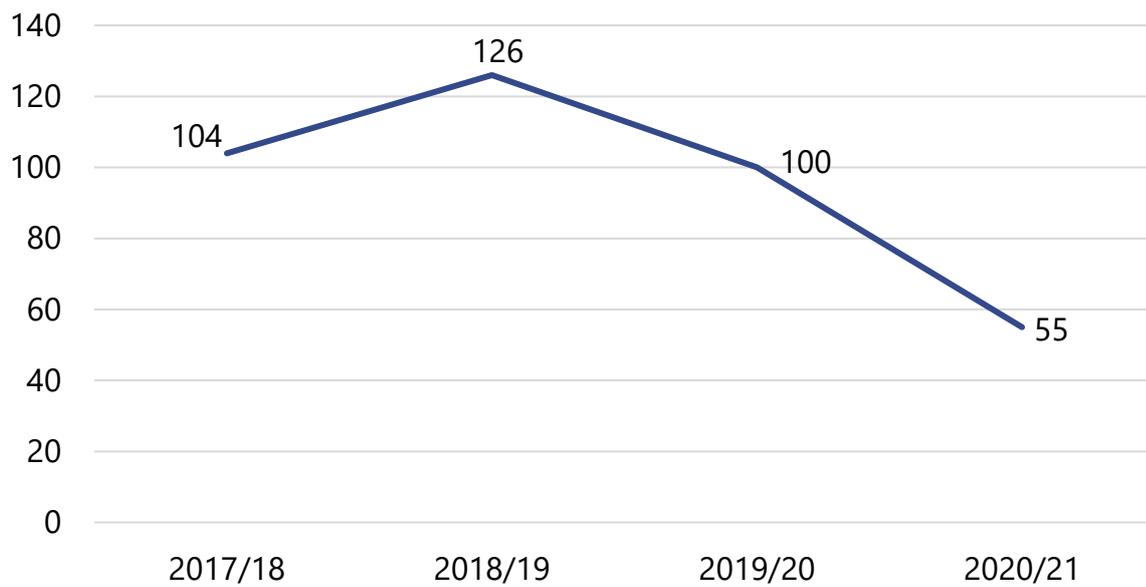
Of the 14 individuals identified as suitable for PCM who have now exited the process and the vulnerability was reduced or managed, 3 were referred to the health sector, 2 were referred to the education sector and 1 was referred to the prison sector. No onward referral was required for 8 individuals.

For the individual identified as suitable for PCM who was deemed not to be vulnerable to radicalisation and exited the process, no onward referral was required.

2.2. Referrals over time

There were a total of 55 referrals to Prevent in Scotland in the year ending March 2021. This represents a 45% decrease in comparison with 2019/20 (100), and a 56% decrease in comparison with 2018/19 (126) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of referrals to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2021



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

The proportion of individuals who were deemed not suitable for PCM in the year ending March 2021 was 4 percentage points higher (55%) than the year ending March 2020 (51%).

The proportion of cases deemed suitable for PCM in the year ending March 2021 was 4 percentage points lower (45%) than the year ending March 2020 (49%).

3. Demographic information

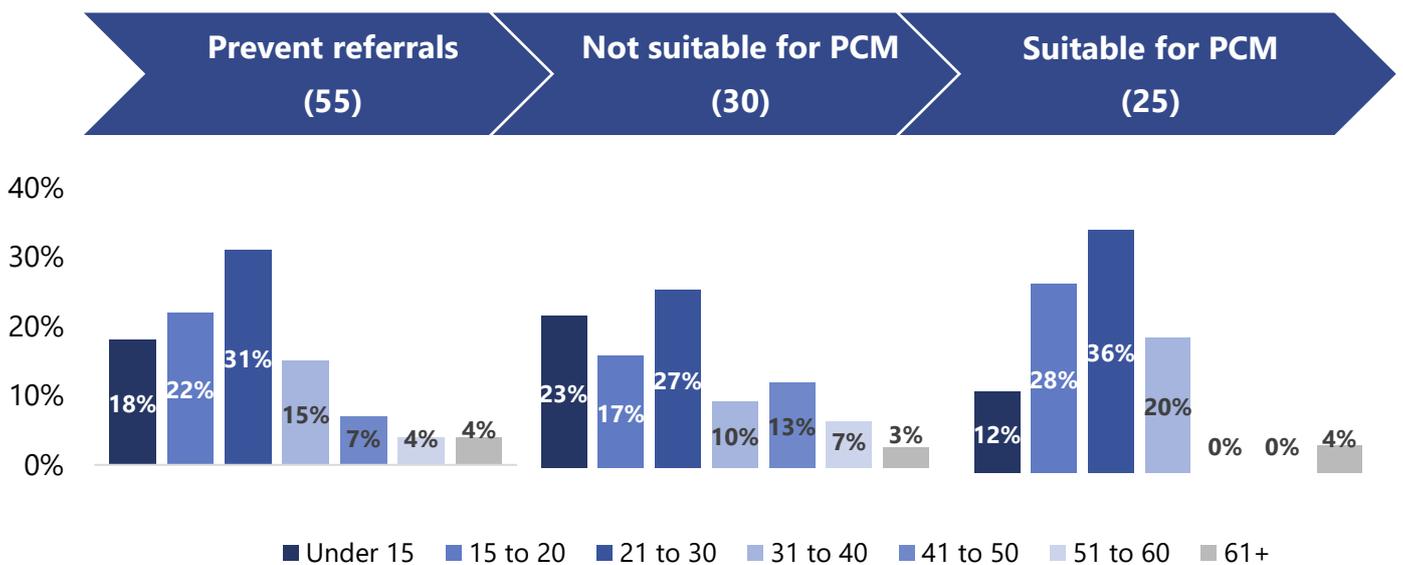
This section presents information on individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland in 2020/21 due to concerns that they were vulnerable to radicalisation. Demographics (including age, gender and region) are reported, as well as the type of concern raised.

3.1. Age

Of the 55 Prevent referrals in Scotland, the largest proportion were for individuals aged 21-30 (17; 31%). There were 12 (22%) referrals for individuals aged 15-20, and 10 (18%) referrals for individuals aged under 15.

Individuals aged 21-30 also made up the largest proportion of the 30 referrals that were not suitable for PCM (8; 27%) and the 25 referrals that were suitable for PCM (9; 36%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Age of individuals at time of referral for all cases, for cases not suitable for PCM, and for cases suitable for PCM⁵



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

The median age of individuals referred to Prevent was 22, while the average age was 26.

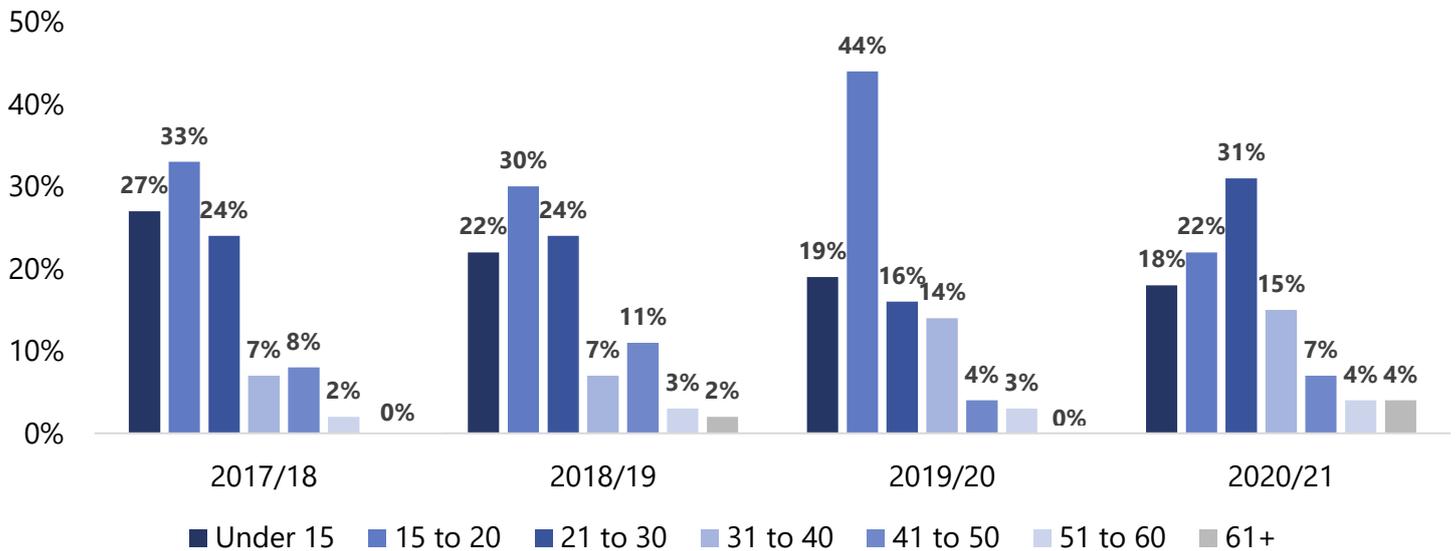
The median age of individuals referred to Prevent by the education sector was 12, while the median age of individuals referred to Prevent by the police was 29⁶.

⁵ Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

⁶ Median ages are not presented for other sectors due to the number of referrals being five or less.

As shown in Figure 4, while the largest proportion of referrals in 2020/21 was for individuals aged 21-30 (31%), in previous years most referrals have been for individuals aged 15-20 (44% in 2019/20, 30% in 2018/19 and 33% in 2017/18). Section 4 provides more detail regarding the extent to which COVID-19 may have impacted on the age breakdown of referrals in 2020/21.

Figure 4: Age of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2021⁷



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

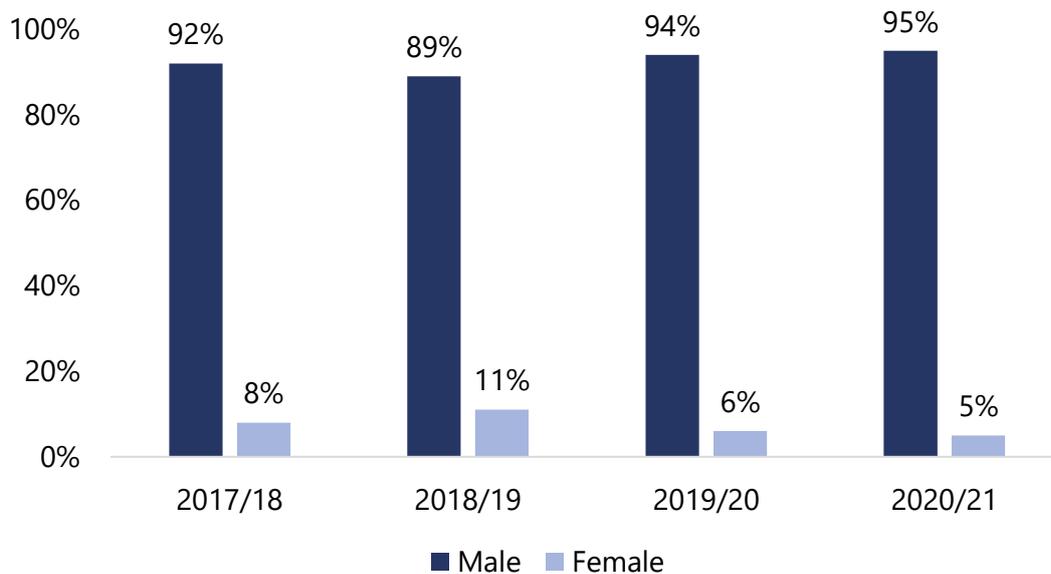
3.2. Gender

The majority of the 55 individuals referred to Prevent were male (52; 95%). Of the 30 individuals that were not suitable for PCM, 28 (93%) were male while 2 (7%) were female. Of the 25 individuals that were suitable for PCM, 24 (96%) were male while 1 (4%) was female.

As shown in Figure 5, the proportion of males referred to Prevent has been consistently higher than the proportion of females referred since 2017/18.

⁷ Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Figure 5: Gender of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2021



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

3.3. Type of concern giving rise to Prevent referrals

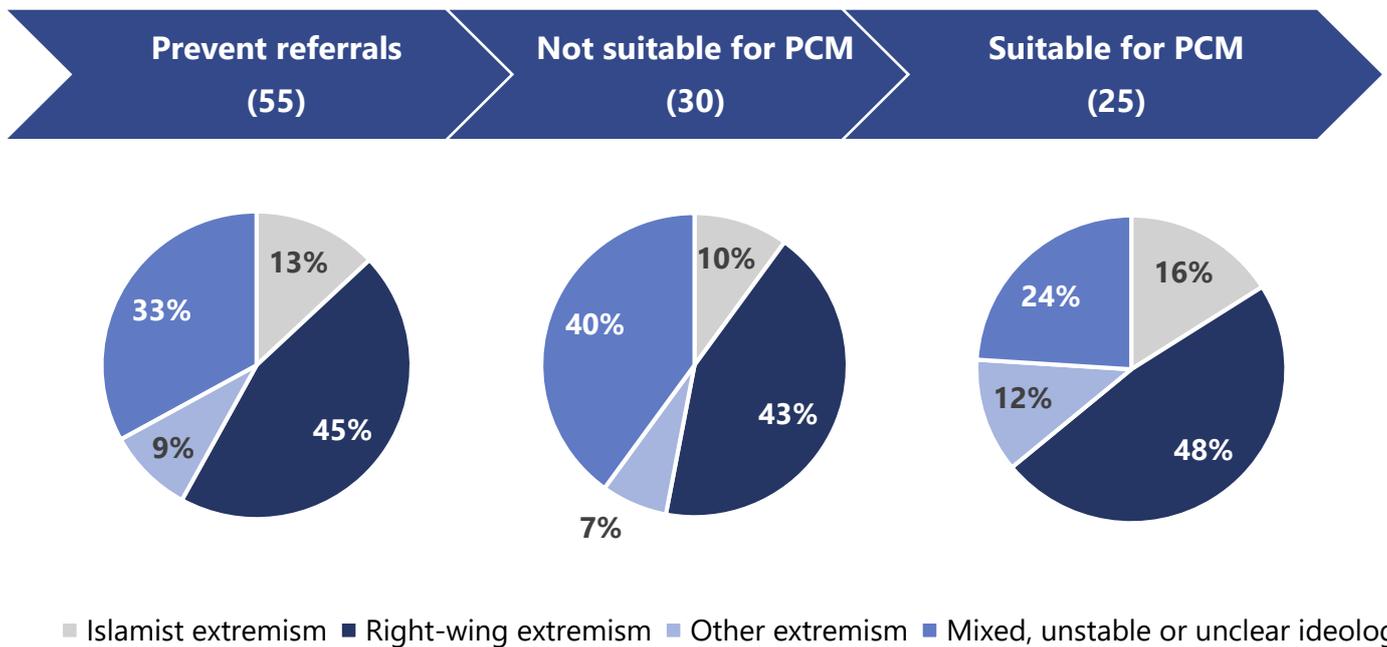
Of the 55 Prevent referrals in Scotland, 25 individuals (45%) were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism. Eighteen (33%) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology⁸, while 7 (13%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism. The remaining 5 individuals (9%) were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism (including, for example, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim concerns).

Of the 30 individuals that were not suitable for PCM, 13 (43%) were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism, 12 (40%) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology, 3 (10%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism, and 2 (7%) were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism.

Of the 25 individuals that were considered to be suitable for PCM, almost half (12; 48%) were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism. Six (24%) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology, 4 (16%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism, and 3 (12%) were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism (Figure 6).

⁸ This category reflects instances where the ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple ideologies (mixed), shifts between different ideologies (unstable), or where the individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still pose a terrorism risk (unclear).

Figure 6: Type of concern for all cases, for cases not suitable for PCM, and for cases suitable for PCM⁹



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

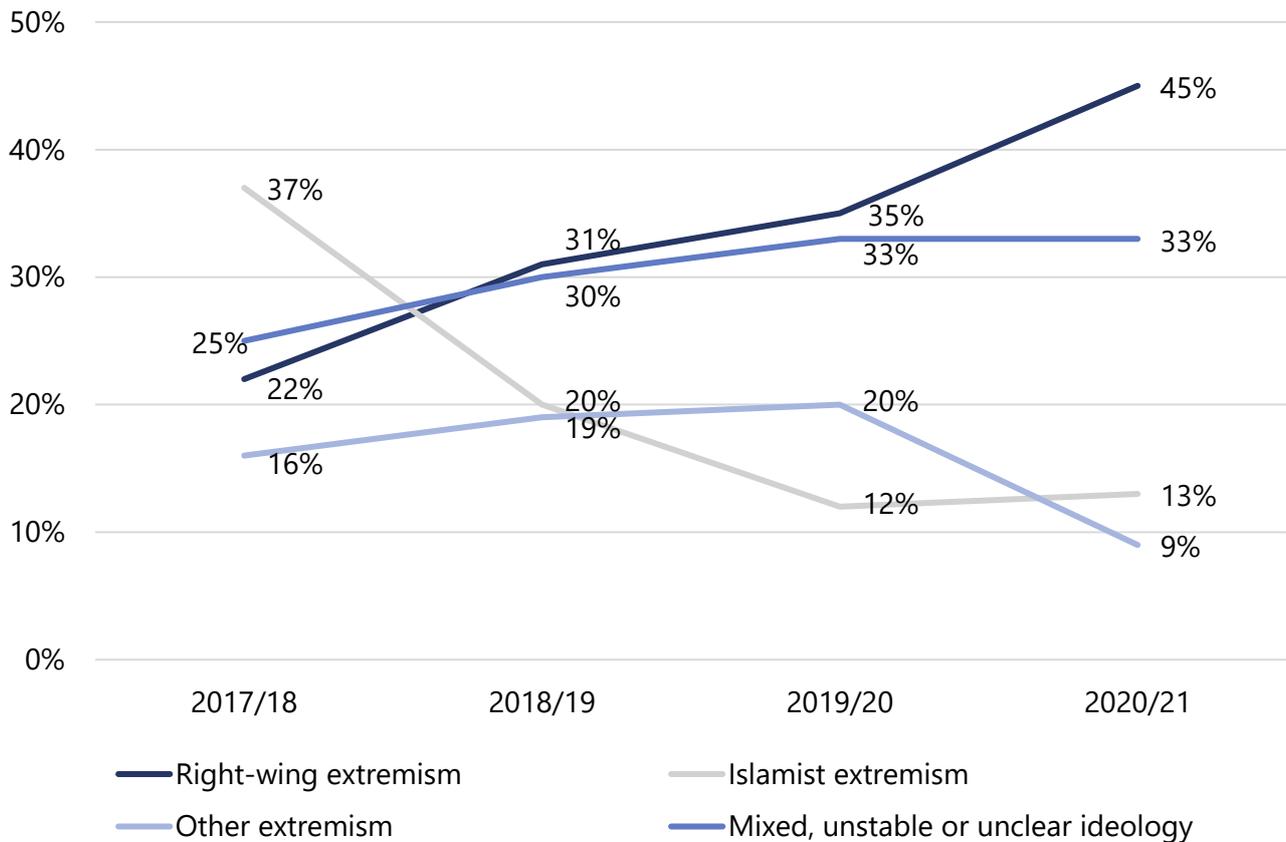
For referrals related to right-wing extremism and a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology, individuals aged 21-30 accounted for the largest number of cases (11 and 5 respectively). For referrals related to Islamist extremism, individuals aged under 15 accounted for the largest number referred (4), while for referrals related to other types of extremism individuals aged 31-40 accounted for the largest number referred (2).

Of the 25 referrals related to right-wing extremism, the 18 referrals related to a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology and the 5 referrals related to other types of extremism, the largest numbers came from the police (12, 7 and 3 respectively). Of the 7 referrals related to Islamist extremism, most came from the education sector (4).

Figure 7 shows that since 2017/18, the proportion of referrals related to right-wing extremism has risen (from 22% in 2017/18 to 45% in 2020/21), while the proportion related to Islamist extremism has fallen (from 37% in 2017/18 to 13% in 2020/21).

⁹ Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Figure 7: Type of concern for referrals to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2021



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

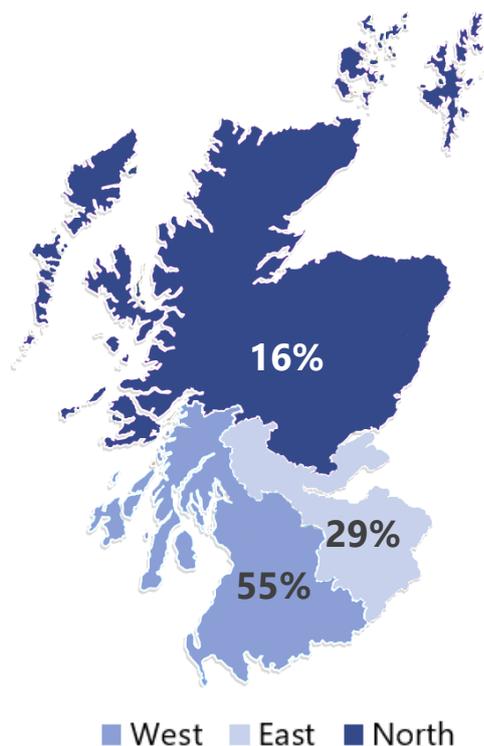
Base sizes: **20/21** – Right-wing = 25, Islamist = 7, Other = 5, Mixed, unstable or unclear = 18, **19/20** – Right-wing = 35, Islamist = 12, Other = 20, Mixed, unstable or unclear = 33, **18/19** – Right-wing = 39, Islamist = 25, Other = 24, Mixed, unstable or unclear = 38, **17/18** – Right-wing = 23, Islamist = 38, Other = 17, Mixed, unstable or unclear = 26

3.4. Region

The largest proportion of the 55 referrals were from the West of Scotland (30; 55%). Sixteen referrals (29%) were from the East of Scotland, and 9 (16%) were from the North of Scotland (Figure 8)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Police Scotland uses three main operational regions: East, West and North. The North of Scotland region covers: Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Highland, Moray, the Orkney Islands, Perth and Kinross, the Shetland Islands and the Western Isles. The West region covers: Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire. The East region covers: East Lothian, Edinburgh City, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Stirling and West Lothian.

Figure 8: Region of referrals

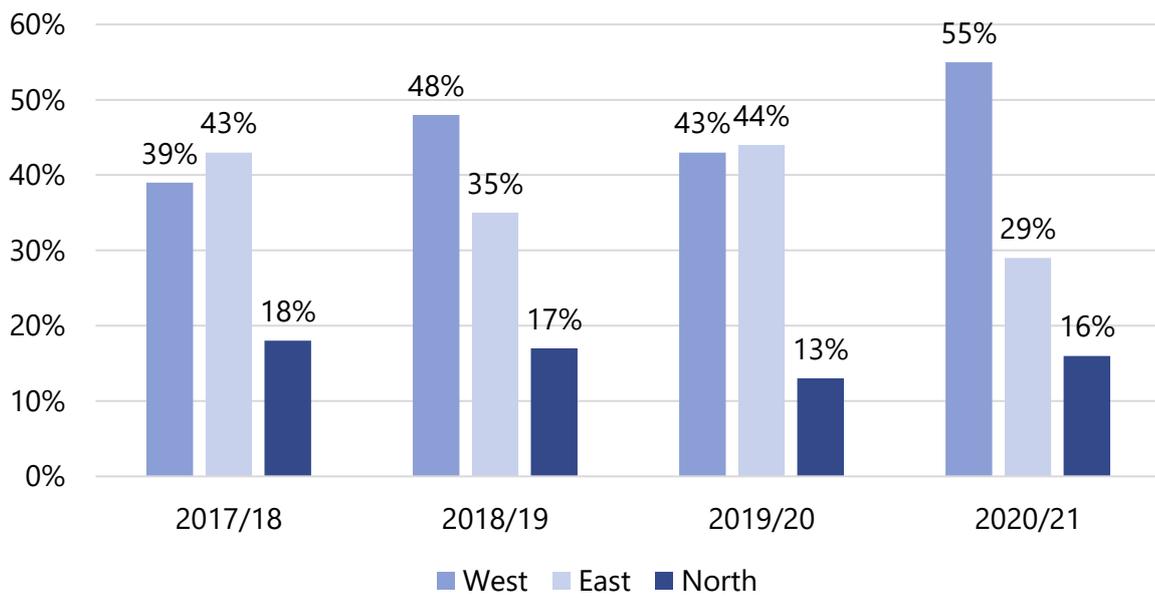


Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

Of the 30 referrals from the West of Scotland, 18 were deemed not suitable for PCM, while 12 were suitable for PCM. Of the 16 referrals from the East of Scotland, 7 were deemed not suitable for PCM, while 9 were suitable for PCM. Of the 9 referrals from the North of Scotland, 5 were deemed not suitable for PCM, while 4 were suitable for PCM.

As Figure 9 shows, the pattern of more referrals coming from the West than the East is different to the previous year (2019/20) when there was a more even split between referrals from the West and the East (43% and 44% respectively). However, it is in line with 2018/19, when there were more referrals from the West (48%, 35% from the East).

Figure 9: Region of referrals to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2021



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021

4. The impact of COVID-19 on referrals to Prevent

There were fewer referrals to Prevent in 2020/21 than in previous years (55 in 2020/21 compared with 100 in 2019/20 and 126 in 2018/19). This coincides with many statutory sectors being closed or only partially open during periods of 'lockdown', when restrictions were in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is therefore highly probable that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures contributed to the lower number of referrals in 2020/21, with reduced levels of in-person contact making individuals' vulnerabilities less visible to referring bodies.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also likely to have had an impact on the main sectors from which referrals originated in 2020/21. As in previous years, in 2020/21 the highest proportion of referrals came from the police (24; 44%) and education sector (10; 18%). However, the proportion of referrals from the education sector fell this year (from 32% in 2019/20). It is likely that this reduction is related to the closure of schools, universities and other education settings during 2020/21 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In relation to demographics, Section 3.1 showed that most referrals in 2020/21 were for individuals aged between 21-30 (17; 31%). In 2019/20, the highest proportion of referrals was for individuals aged 15-20 (44%), while 16% were for individuals aged 21-30. It is likely that this trend also reflects the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, that many services with which young people would usually come into contact were closed over periods of lockdown, including education settings.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, it is possible that there are a number of people at risk of radicalisation who were not referred to Prevent during the 2020/21 period. While the Prevent presence within Police Scotland has continued throughout COVID-19, the restrictions and changes in work practices associated with the pandemic led to a decrease in face-to-face interaction, making it more difficult for support services and statutory partners to identify, and therefore refer, those with vulnerabilities. However, although there were less referrals to Prevent in 2020/21, data from the first half of the 2021/22 reporting period has indicated that since restrictions have eased, referrals to Prevent have begun to increase. While referrals have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, Police Scotland and Scottish Government are working with sectors to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on referrals to Prevent, including through providing support for the implementation of the PMAP process, delivering training and raising awareness of the mixed, unclear and unstable ideology category. A fuller assessment of the extent to which COVID-19 continued to impact referrals to Prevent in 2021/22 will be provided in next year's publication.

5. Data quality

5.1. Data quality

The information presented in this report is subject to data quality checks (see below). However, the data relies on the recording of information by police and local authority partners and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that the totals are complete and accurate.

5.2. Quality checks

The data in this report has been compiled by Police Scotland and Scottish Government analysts, who have worked together to quality assure the data. The checks have included:

- Checking for duplicate data.
- Ensuring the data provided is complete.
- Querying contradictory data.

5.3. Improvements to data quality

Police Scotland are continuing to work with Scottish Government analysts to improve the quality of the data included in these reports. Updates will be made to the way the data is collected and recorded, which will improve the coverage and completeness of future publications.

6. Glossary

Intervention Provider (IP) – IPs are ideological and theological specialists. Where individuals have a need for ideological or theological support or possess a mixed, unclear or unstable ideology, Home Office approved IPs are commissioned to increase theological understanding, challenge extremist ideas or fixated thinking, or to otherwise understand the extent of concerns relating to ideology.

Mixed, unclear or unstable ideology – This category reflects instances where the ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple ideologies (mixed), shifts between different ideologies (unstable), or where the individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still pose a terrorism risk (unclear).

Police-led Prevent Case Management (PCM) – Police-led PCM covers the management of individuals, groups or institutions that are not suitable for PMAP but which have identified Prevent-related issues requiring support or mitigation.

Prevent Case Management (PCM) – Where a vulnerable individual is referred to Prevent and identified as requiring support, this is provided via PCM, which involves either a Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) or police-led PCM.

Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) – PMAP is a process which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being radicalised or drawn into terrorism. PMAP uses a multi-agency approach to identify individuals at risk, assess the nature and extent of that risk, and develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Prevent Professional Concerns (PPC) Panel – PPC Panel is the previous term for PMAP. The PMAP process replaced PPC Panels in 2021.