

Protection and prevention under one roof

I recently spent an afternoon at a college on the outskirts of Birmingham, close to where I was born and brought up. I was there to watch Travis Frain deliver one of his counter-extremism workshops to students, and to sit down with the college team for a conversation about Martyn's Law.

That morning, the college had moved more than 2,000 people in a fire evacuation. It was a fire exercise in its own right, and the team were also capturing what it taught them through the additional lens of Martyn's Law, alongside work to brief and engage staff on lockdown and other public protection procedures. By the afternoon, its students were in a room with a survivor of a terrorist attack, listening to his story and asking him questions.

Protection, preparedness and prevention, in one building, on one day. That combination has stayed with me, because I think it shows where Martyn's Law will work best.

Where Martyn's Law will work best

With the implementation period under way, organisations across the country are working out what the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 means for them. There is a real risk that it gets treated as a compliance exercise: handed to estates or facilities, documented, filed and revisited when the regulator calls.

I don't believe that is where the best outcomes will come from. The organisations that do this well will connect their Martyn's Law arrangements to the work they already do to keep people safe: their safeguarding, their culture of raising concerns and, in education, their Prevent duty.

Education settings have a genuine head start. They already have safeguarding leads, established routes for reporting worries and staff who know their students well. The college I visited was building on exactly that foundation.

Over the years, I have been involved in examining the organisational points of failure from UK terrorist attacks since 2016. Post-incident reflections often highlight vulnerable people whose behaviour had changed, and on some occasions previous Prevent referrals had been made. Those reviews are a reminder that the people and organisations around someone may hold part of the picture long before an attack. That is why I believe Prevent and protective security belong in the same conversation.

Starting with a conversation

A fire evacuation does not, on its own, tell us how arrangements would work during a terrorist incident. Evacuation is one response among several, and some threats require people to move away from danger, hide or stay where they are. That is why reflecting on a mass evacuation through a Martyn's Law lens is such a sensible step. It turns an exercise the college was already running into learning about how it moves, communicates with and accounts for its people.

There was no sales pitch. We talked, I listened, and I pointed them towards some of the free tools and guidance on [ProtectUK](#). I also connected them with others we are working with who have faced similar estate challenges. This college was local, so the whole 90-minute conversation cost them a cup of tea.

I think that matters. Martyn's Law asks for measures that are reasonable and proportionate, and good support can begin with free resources and an honest conversation with someone who has seen how these things go wrong. I have written before that communication works, and I say it often: the learning happens on

the ground, sitting and talking with the people who are leading Martyn's Law implementation. This was a practical example of both.

Why Travis's voice lands

Travis Frain was 19, a university student on a visit to London, when he was injured in the Westminster Bridge terrorist attack on 22 March 2017. Through Resilience in Unity, which he launched in 2021, he and other survivors deliver workshops in schools and colleges, drawing on lived experience to help young people think about extremism and its consequences.

The college had made attendance compulsory for its students, as part of its wider safeguarding and Prevent work. That decision is worth noting. It placed prevention alongside protection as part of the same responsibility to its students.

Travis tells his story powerfully, and what struck me most was how much space he made for questions. He was a student himself when the attack happened, and the young people in the room could recognise something of their own lives in his. Having an experience to share and being able to engage a room are different skills. Travis has both.

I enjoyed talking with the students myself. I was even called "Miss", which amused me.

An advocate for change

His influence reaches well beyond the classroom. In 2018 he co-founded Survivors Against Terror, a group of survivors campaigning for better support for people affected by terrorism. That campaigning helped bring about the UK's first National Day for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism, marked on 21 August this year. He has advised Counter Terrorism Policing, taught police officers and university students, and been recognised with a British Citizen Award and an OBE. In 2024 he became the youngest Deputy Lieutenant in the country.

Travis is also an ambassador for GCG, and that relationship means a great deal to me. My own experience comes from three decades in policing, including leading the West Midlands regional Prevent team, sitting on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) panels and leading a national Protect and Prepare portfolio focused on what needed to change after attacks. Travis brings the experience of being caught up in one and living with its consequences.

He holds us to account on our ethics, our standards and how we engage with people. That kind of challenge belongs at the centre of any work concerned with the safety of others. We are proud to work with him and to support what he does.

Four strands, one aim

CONTEST, the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, is built on Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. From the inside, the strands can feel like separate worlds, with different teams, different language and different budgets. On the ground they meet all the time. That afternoon was a small example: an estates conversation about protection and preparedness, and a classroom conversation about prevention, serving the same young people.

Those closest to someone are often the first to notice worrying changes in their behaviour. A change does not automatically mean radicalisation, but people should feel able to seek advice. Education staff can speak with their safeguarding lead or local Prevent team, and families and friends can find information and confidential advice through ACT Early.

For me, the afternoon was a reminder, if one were needed, that all four strands of CONTEST work together to build a safer UK. Martyn's Law gives organisations a reason to look hard at protection. The best of them will use it to look at the whole picture.

I left encouraged by the college, and with a great deal of respect for what Travis brings to this work. If you work in education, Resilience in Unity is well worth a look.

I'll finish with a question for anyone working through their own preparations: how are you connecting Martyn's Law with the work your organisation already does to look after people? In education, that will mean safeguarding and the Prevent duty. Elsewhere, it may be welfare, security, customer care or simply the staff who know your site and your community best.

About Travis Frain

Travis D. Frain OBE BCA DL is a survivor of the 2017 Westminster Bridge terrorist attack, a counter-extremism educator and an advocate for victims and survivors. He co-founded Survivors Against Terror in 2018 and launched Resilience in Unity in November 2021. His experience includes advising Counter Terrorism Policing nationally and teaching police officers and university students.

He was named a Young Leader in National Security in 2021, received the British Citizen Award in 2023 and was appointed OBE in the 2024 New Year Honours. Later in 2024, he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, the youngest in the UK. He campaigned for the National Day for Victims and Survivors of Terrorism, first observed on 21 August 2026. He is a GCG ambassador for counter-terrorism preparedness and the survivor's voice in protective security.

Further information: [Travis's biography](#) | [GCG ambassador profile](#)

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