

PREVENT
TRAINING
MATERIALS
FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION

CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF ST MARK AND ST JOHN (MARJON)

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Context

The University of St Mark and St John – widely known as Marjon - offers undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research degrees in a range of disciplines covering culture and language; education and social sciences; and sports and health sciences. It is located in a unified campus in Plymouth, about five miles north of the city centre.

Marjon has about 2000 undergraduate students and about 250 postgraduate students following taught and research degree programmes. It has around 350 academic and professional services staff members. Although it gained its university title recently, in 2013, its history stretches back to the middle of the 19th century and its predecessor institutions were at the heart of the development of school education in England.

Risk analysis

Marjon considered that although the risks arising in relation to Prevent were low, it was important that all staff were aware of the university's responsibilities. Dr Elizabeth Smith, Marjon's senior point of contact in relation to Prevent, is also the pro-vice-chancellor with responsibility for learning, teaching and the student experience, and commented on the strong connection between Prevent readiness and the university's responsibilities for student support.

"Students tell us that the people at Marjon are one of the main reasons they choose Marjon," said Dr Smith. "Every staff member is important in helping our students succeed, and so it's important that we empower them to understand Prevent as part of their work."

Training

Lynda Tout, Marjon's inclusion co-ordinator, takes the day-to-day lead on Prevent, and was tasked with preparing Marjon's training plan together with the head of HR, Lucy Pengelly. "The Leadership Foundation Prevent training materials were a great resource in enabling us to develop and deliver our training plan," said Lynda Tout. "We knew that we had to cover a range of different groups – including governors – and that a range of methods would be necessary."

The approach adopted was to provide introductory training for all staff, and to supplement this for individual staff groups as appropriate. The specialist training uses the relevant Leadership Foundation module.

For the introductory training, Leadership Foundation Module 1 was used. For staff with normal access to computers, the e-learning version, hosted on Marjon's virtual learning environment, was used. An additional short presentation was prepared to follow this package, with material specific to Marjon: contacts, policies, and governance information.

Not all staff have access to computers – for instance catering, cleaning, security and maintenance staff – and so face-to-face training was also arranged supported by a short handout with university-specific materials. This was done in small groups of colleagues in specific teams, and was led by Lynda Tout, with support from HR. The training drew upon the Module 1 material, tailored for Marjon's specific circumstances, and also used the WRAP training DVD to use video within these sessions. The case studies were particularly valuable in enabling people to explore how radicalisation might manifest itself in their own work context. Staff feedback was very positive: they found that the training was informative and engaging; helped to challenge their assumptions; and gave them confidence.

For more specific training, Marjon is adopting an approach whereby training is led by staff in the area concerned. Thus, specific training for academic staff – which brings together material relating to student wellbeing and also to academic freedom – will be led by staff in each faculty. In each case, the relevant Leadership Foundation module is being used to provide the core of the training.

By using the Leadership Foundation material in this way, Marjon is able to meet its obligations under Prevent within the realities of resource and budgets.

Lessons learned

Lynda Tout identified key lessons from Marjon's approach to training staff in Prevent:

- Think carefully about the audience for each topic. Talk to team leaders to understand the context in which they are working, and adapt the materials as necessary to make sure that they are relevant and to the point. Give appropriate examples, eg for cleaning staff working early/late they will see students when other staff aren't around.
- Identify the appropriate person to present the materials. Credibility matters here, and it may be, for instance, that academic staff are more likely to engage with the issues if they are presented by a fellow academic. With other staff, identify someone approachable and known to them. To encourage discussion, it should be someone not in their line management.
- Make sure that you know the materials. In many ways, the Leadership Foundation materials are train-the-trainer quality, covering all possible bases. As the trainer, it's important to select what matters to the audience, to avoid overwhelming people with information or diverting from the main points.