



Advice notes 25 Jul 2025

PREPARING FOR THE TERRORISM (PROTECTION OF PREMISES) ACT 2025

This advice note was last updated on 25 July 2025 and was issued by the Martyn's Law Steering Group.

Background



Martyn's Law, formally known as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, has now received Royal Assent. Named in memory of Martyn Hett, a victim of the 2017 Manchester Arena attack, whose mother, Figen Murray, has campaigned tirelessly for stronger security measures, the legislation aims to ensure that premises accessible to the public are better prepared for potential acts of terrorism. The law introduces a duty for those responsible for certain premises and events to take proportionate steps to mitigate and respond to terrorist threats. The legislation is based on five core principles:

1. Assessment of terrorist threats.
2. Consideration of risk.
3. Mitigation measures.
4. Training and preparedness.
5. Responsibility and accountability.

How is this applicable to parish and town councils

Martyn's Law will apply to venues based on capacity:

- Standard Tier — Premises with a capacity of 200 to 799 people.
- Enhanced Tier — Premises with a capacity of 800 or more people.

This may include council-owned or managed venues such as:

- Village and community halls.
- Public events (fairs, fireworks displays, markets, etc.).
- Local festivals and performances.
- Sports and recreation facilities.

Key requirements

Parish and town councils responsible for qualifying premises will likely need to:

- Conduct a terrorism risk assessment relevant to the premises or event.

- Develop and document plans to protect people on site, including:
 - Lockdown procedures.
 - Safe and coordinated evacuation strategies.
 - Use of available first aid and fire safety equipment.
- Train staff and volunteers in recognising suspicious behaviour and responding to incidents.
- Record plans, training, and exercises to demonstrate compliance.
- Engage with emergency services and local resilience partners to ensure alignment with broader emergency plans.

Understanding the threat from terrorism

The United Kingdom (UK) faces a persistent threat from terrorism. Although attacks are rare, the impact of such attacks is very high. It is therefore important to take sensible and proportionate steps to prepare for such an incident. Terrorists in the UK have used a range of attack types, including:

- Use of knives, fire, guns or other weapons.
- Deliberately driving a vehicle into a crowd.
- Using explosive devices which can be carried by a vehicle, person or in the post to a location.
- Setting fire to buildings or open sites with dry vegetation.
- Poisoning.

Parish and town councils will need to consider how premises and events could become targeted as part of a terrorist incident and the types of terrorist attacks which may be relevant. Things to consider include:

- Describe the premises and their operating environment.
- Which type of terrorist attack is most likely to occur at the premises?
- Have you identified relevant councillors, staff and volunteers who must receive terrorism protection training and ensured it is provided to them?

- Who will put the plan into action in the event of an incident?
- How is the plan and relevant information being communicated to people who occupy the premises? This may include groups of people who hire your community centres.

Practical emergency planning

- Warning people of an attack — Warning people of an attack can save lives by alerting them to the danger and directing them towards safety. Things to consider include:
 - In the event of an attack, what actions will be taken to communicate with people on your premises rapidly?
 - Include information about any available communication systems. How will they be used and who will use them?
 - Consider what messages will be used.
- Lockdown procedures — Lockdown means locking doors or other barriers to prevent access to part or all of a site or building. Lockdown aims to reduce the immediate threat of harm by delaying attackers and preventing people from inadvertently putting themselves into the path of danger. As part of lockdown, you may wish to consider bringing customers, visitors, workers and nearby members of the public into the building, before securing doors, when you assess it is safe and appropriate to do so. Lockdown will not always be appropriate, so careful consideration must be given as to the circumstances in which lockdown should be used. Lockdown actions should not be taken if people are put at risk. Things to consider include:
 - Explain how you will lockdown your premises in an emergency and in what circumstances this is likely to be possible. Check that existing doors and shutters can be locked quickly and safely from the inside. Identify secure rooms and areas that can be locked quickly.

- What action will you take to ensure relevant workers know how to lockdown the premises? Your actions should include details of the role that relevant councillors, staff and volunteers play in locking down the premises and how and when they have practised locking down the premises.
 - How will people on your premises be informed that it has been locked down and that they should not attempt to leave because of the threat outside? Create clear instructions for staff on when and how to initiate a lockdown.
- Evacuation plans — Getting people safely and quickly away from danger could save lives. Identify potential evacuation routes to take people away from the threat. Careful consideration must be given to the circumstances in which evacuation takes place. Things to consider include:
 - Describe your evacuation plan, including mapping out and signing exit routes and designated muster points away from the building and potential threats. Assign trained marshals or volunteers and detail the roles they will play in evacuating premises. Some counter terrorism police teams have advised that designated muster points should not be advertised as this may make this point a target. Parish and town councils are usually encouraged to post everything on their website.
 - What action will you take to ensure your relevant workers know how to evacuate the premises? Your actions should include any training, how and when relevant councillors, staff and volunteers have practised evacuating the premises.
 - How will you communicate with people at the premises in the event of an evacuation? It is important to communicate where the threat is clearly so that they can evacuate from it.
 - Have you taken action to ensure your evacuation plan supports and does not conflict with those for neighbouring premises?

- Use of fire and medical equipment — Research into serious injuries shows that the quicker people are treated, the greater their likelihood of survival. Using simple techniques with readily available equipment can save lives. Health and safety risk assessments already in place in your premises will be relevant. Consider if additional first aid and fire safety equipment may be needed in the response to a terrorist attack. Things to consider include:
 - Complete a first aid needs Assessment detailing any findings and when it was completed.
 - Regularly check that first aid or fire safety equipment is up-to-date, fit for purpose and readily available. Consider adding PACT trauma packs to your first aid equipment.
 - Ensure relevant workers and suppliers of first aid for events have been trained to use that equipment as part of their terrorism protection training, or otherwise, record the training as well as planned refresher training. For example, the supply of wound packs that close knife wounds.
- Notification of emergency services — Getting the emergency services to the scene of an attack quickly with the right resources is key to saving lives and preventing further harm. Passing key information to the police will enable an effective and appropriate response. The police will pass information to the other emergency services. Things to consider include:
 - How will you ensure all relevant workers understand how to contact the police? Include how and when you will brief relevant workers on what to say to the police. The safety of the caller is a priority.
 - Could you display posters of the appropriate material that summarises emergency contact numbers and the information the police need to know in the event of a terrorist incident? If so, where will you do so?
 - Ensure someone is assigned to meet and brief the first responders on arrival.
- Coordination with wider plans — Getting early warning of an attack can vastly improve responses and maximise the

effect of life-saving actions. Things to consider include:

- Have you communicated with the persons responsible for neighbouring premises during your planning? If not, what action will you take to identify and contact such persons?
- How will you communicate with them in the event of a terrorist incident?
- Integrate your plans with local authority and emergency service protocols.
- Register council-managed events with the local Safety Advisory Group (SAG) where applicable.
- Participate in community resilience forums or emergency planning exercises.

Publicly accessible locations and wider public protection

Although Martyn's Law applies to specific premises based on size and function, parish and town councils also have a responsibility to consider publicly accessible locations (PALs) that fall outside the formal scope of the Act, including:

- Public open spaces (e.g. parks, greens and promenades).
- High streets and markets.
- War memorials and civic squares.
- Community noticeboards or popular gathering points.

Voluntary protective measures for PALs include:

- Awareness training — Roll out general awareness training to councillors, staff, volunteers, community groups so that all have the basis of terrorism training, know how to identify suspicious packages or behaviour and know how to respond.
- Encourage vigilance — Display national campaign material where relevant.
- Design out risk — Use landscaping and street furniture to restrict unauthorised vehicle access.
- Ensure clear sightlines — Avoid dense foliage or structures that create concealment or impede visibility.

- Collaborate with local police and community groups — Share concerns and intelligence.
- Plan for informal gatherings or spontaneous events — Especially around anniversaries, protests, or national moments.

Clerk reporting and council recommendations

Parish and town council clerks play a crucial role in ensuring that councils are fully informed of their obligations under Martyn's Law and can make informed decisions. Clerks should consider

Reporting to the council:

- Inform councillors and event partners about Martyn's Law and its implications. Consider adding it as a standing item on agendas for facilities or events committees.
- Provide a summary report on:
 - Properties or events the council owns, organises or licenses that are potentially in scope of the Act.
 - Current preparedness (risk assessments, plans, training, etc.) and plans for completing or updating risk assessments with terrorism in mind.
 - Recommended next steps or resource needs.
- Highlight any known gaps in capability or areas of concern requiring a decision.

Recommendations for council consideration:

- Adopt a formal emergency and terrorism response plan for council-managed venues and events.
- Approve training or awareness sessions for staff, volunteers, and councillors.
- Budget for necessary safety improvements, such as signage, equipment, or secure access controls.
- Engage with the principal authority emergency planning teams, and Counter Terrorism Security Advisors, emergency services for additional support and coordination.

Joint planning across parish and town councils

Parish and town councils, particularly in rural or semi-rural areas, can benefit significantly from collaborative approaches to meet the requirements of Martyn's Law. Many parish and town councils manage similar types of community buildings and events, and often face common challenges in resources, training, and capacity.

Opportunities for collaboration:

- Joint risk assessments — Work together to develop shared templates or risk registers for similar venues (e.g. village halls and recreation grounds) to save time and improve consistency.
- Shared training sessions — Pool resources to arrange collective ACT Awareness training, first aid courses, or emergency exercises for staff and volunteers.
- Mutual support agreements — Formalise mutual support arrangements to provide personnel, equipment, or temporary premises during a local emergency or threat incident.
- Collective procurement — Purchase protective equipment or signage in bulk across multiple councils to reduce cost.
- Joint events and contingency planning — Collaborate on plans for large-scale or cross-boundary events (e.g. carnivals and remembrance services) to ensure clarity of responsibility and coordinated response.

By working together, parish and town councils can strengthen community protection, build resilience, and meet legal obligations more efficiently and effectively. Things to consider include:

- Establish contact with neighbouring parish and town councils to discuss common priorities.
- Create a parish or town council resilience group or network to coordinate planning efforts.
- Seek support from the Police Counter Terrorism Security Adviser or the principal authority emergency planning team to facilitate workshops or joint exercises.

Community resilience planning and business continuity

In addition to meeting legal duties, parish and town councils are encouraged to prepare community resilience plans to improve local readiness and ensure continuity of operations during emergencies.

Benefits and components:

- Helps maintain delivery of essential services (e.g. burial services, communications and staffing).
- Identifies local risks (e.g. power failure, flooding and terrorism) and available resources.
- Clarifies roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures.
- Supports vulnerable residents and strengthens community networks.
- Enhances collaboration with emergency services and neighbouring councils.

A resilience plan complements terrorism response efforts and strengthens the council's ability to respond to and recover from disruptions, whether caused by malicious or natural events.

Resources and support

- **Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) e-learning** — Free online training for organisations.
- **Protect UK** — Guidance and training tools.
- **Local Police Counter-Terrorism Security Advisers** — Provide specialist advice on physical and procedural security measures, assist with site-specific risk assessments and security planning, offer guidance on event security and vulnerability management, and deliver ACT awareness training and other counter-terrorism resources.
- **Local authority protect duty lead or emergency planning officer** — Serve as the local contact for councils preparing for the new legislation, help interpret statutory guidance once available and ensure consistency across the area, support the development and coordination of emergency

and security plans, and facilitate contact with multi-agency groups, such as the Local Resilience Forum or Safety Advisory Groups.

Next steps

Whilst the national guidance publication is awaited, there are many steps parish and town councils can take to prepare. These include:

- Sign up for the Protect UK website and monitor updates and prepare for formal statutory guidance when published.
- Establish contact with your local Police Counter-Terrorism Security Advisers and protect duty lead for support.
- Identify relevant venues and events under your control.
- Update existing risk assessments to cover potential terrorist activity.
- Begin drafting emergency and community resilience plans.
- Consider applying protective principles to publicly accessible spaces not covered by the Act.
- Ensure clerks report progress to the council with clear recommendations.

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