

Counter-Terrorism

Current national threat level

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is SUBSTANTIAL.

What is terrorism?

Terrorist groups use violence and threats of violence to publicise their causes and as a means to achieve their goals. They often aim to influence or exert pressure on governments and government policies but reject democratic processes, or even democracy itself. Further information can be found on

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/>

Countering terrorism

MI5 has countered terrorist threats to UK interests, both at home and overseas, since the 1960s and the threat has developed significantly since then. It's challenging to understand the intentions and activities of secretive and sometimes highly organised groups. New and changing technologies make it increasingly difficult to obtain information necessary to disrupt the attack planning of these groups. Many are based in inaccessible areas overseas and there are limits to what can be done to prevent attacks planned and launched from abroad. Our techniques and the way we work with other agencies both at home and abroad have to keep pace with the terrorists' capabilities.

What are Threat Levels?

Members of the public should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and report any suspicious activity to the police on 999 or the anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321. <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

What the threat levels mean

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.

- LOW means an attack is highly unlikely
- MODERATE means an attack is possible, but not likely
- SUBSTANTIAL means an attack is likely
- SEVERE means an attack is highly likely
- CRITICAL means an attack is highly likely in the near future

How are threat levels decided?

The threat level for the UK from international terrorism is <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/joint-terrorism-analysis-centre> (JTAC).

MI5 is responsible for setting the threat level from Northern Irish Related Terrorism in Northern Ireland.

In reaching a judgement on the appropriate threat level in any given circumstance several factors need to be taken into account.

These include:

- Available intelligence. It is rare that specific threat information is available and can be relied upon. More often, judgements about the threat will be based on a wide range of information, which is often fragmentary, including the level and nature of current terrorist activity, comparison with events in other countries and previous attacks. Intelligence is only ever likely to reveal part of the picture.
- Terrorist capability. An examination of what is known about the capabilities of the terrorists in question and the method they may use based on previous attacks or from intelligence. This would also analyse the potential scale of the attack.
- Terrorist intentions. Using intelligence and publicly available information to examine the overall aims of the terrorists and the ways they may achieve them including what sort of targets they would consider attacking.
- Timescale. The threat level expresses the likelihood of an attack in the near term. We know from past incidents that some attacks take years to plan, while others are put together more quickly. In the absence of specific intelligence, a judgement will need to be made about how close an attack might be to fruition. Threat levels do not have any set expiry date, but are regularly subject to review in order to ensure that they remain current.

How should you respond?

Threat levels in themselves do not require specific responses from the public. They are a tool for security practitioners working across different sectors of the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) and the police to use in determining what protective security response may be required.

Vigilance is vital regardless of the current national threat level. It is especially important given the current national threat. Sharing national threat levels with the general public keeps everyone informed. It explains the context for the various security measures (for example airport security or bag searches) which we may encounter in our daily lives.

If you have information about possible terrorist activity, call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321.

The Anti-Terrorist Hotline is for tip-offs and confidential information. For warnings about possible bombs or other urgent threats please call 999.

Threat level history

Since 2006, information about the national threat level has been available on the MI5 and Home Office websites. MI5 took on responsibility for National Security work in Northern Ireland in 2007 and is responsible for setting the threat level for Northern Irish Related Terrorism. In September 2010 the threat levels for Northern Ireland-related terrorism were also made available.

In July 2019 changes were made to the terrorism threat level system, to reflect the threat posed by all forms of terrorism, irrespective of ideology. JTAC analyses and assesses all information relating to international terrorism at home and overseas. It is responsible for setting the threat level for Great Britain (including Islamist Terrorism, and the Right and Left Wing Terrorism in Northern Ireland).

National Threat Level

Date	Threat Level
9 February 2022	SUBSTANTIAL
15 November 2021	SEVERE
4 February 2021	SUBSTANTIAL
3 November 2020	SEVERE
4 November 2019	SUBSTANTIAL
23 July 2019	SEVERE

ACT App

The ability to Run, Hide, Tell will vary for reasons such as age, fitness and capability. When running is not an option, people should make every effort to move away from the area as quickly as possible. Additionally, it is imperative that people caught up in such a scenario assist those around them who may need help. The ACT app is available to download on [Google Play](#) or [App Store](#).

Over a thousand specialists from across the UK have helped officers to create this application, including leading organisations from the security sectors.

The ACT app is free for businesses and has been developed to provide access to...

- Practical advice and guidance to help you protect your business, plus information on how to respond in the event of an attack.
- Information on CT Policing's suite of ACT training products, plus access to the online e-Learning package.
- Suite of NaCTSO guidance videos.
- Latest reference documents and publications.
- ACT online reporting form and confidential hotline.
- Emergency response and post-incident guidance.
- Live-time news updates from UK Protect.