**MEDIACOM
INSIGHT**

NPCC COUNTER TERRORISM RESEARCH

KEY FINDINGS

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS COUNCIL

JANUARY 2017

INTRODUCTION

The NPCC is launching a new branding platform that will bring all counter terrorism communications under a single overarching brand for the first time.

This branding platform, together with messaging and creative executions for the first campaign, has been under development by AMV BBDO Creative Agency.

A combined qualitative and quantitative approach was carried out in order to fully explore and meet the objectives:

A **qualitative phase** was included in order to gain individual feedback to add depth and detail around core campaign objectives, to test 2 x adcepts (Make Nothing Happen and Think Like A Terrorist) and to test creative executions. 3 waves of online research took place accompanied by telephone interviews. The sample included a mix of White British and BME participants and also included teens aged 13-17. The sample as a whole was based across the following locations and surrounds: London, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bristol and Reading.

A **quantitative phase** was included to quantify current behaviours and attitudes towards noticing and reporting suspicious activity and behaviours.

The methodology for this stage included a quantitative survey among 2,198 GB adults 18+. Quotas were set on age, gender, and social grade to ensure the sample was reflective of the GB population. The sample size of key audience groups was 'boosted', in order to gauge attitudes towards suspicious behaviour and reporting at a sub group level. The sub-groups boosted to ensure this were as follows: those of Muslim faith, those living in London, and those in living in key metropolitan areas – Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Reading, and Bristol. A separate sample of 202 13-17 year olds (outside of the main 18+ sample) was also included, to gauge views among teens.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Concern about terrorism has increased since 2011 but most believe the police are doing a good job of keeping the public safe**
  - 53% claim to be very/quite concerned about terrorism in 2011 vs. 73%[1] in 2016 (there were slight differences in question text and methodology for the 2011 and 2016 research)
  - 58% agree they are more worried about terrorism in the UK than they were 2 years ago and 64% believe the nature of the terrorist threat has changed in the last 2 years
  - 17% (top score) of respondents said the main reason for concern is that terrorism is unpredictable and can affect anyone, anywhere
  - 75% agree that nationally the police are working hard to prevent terrorism

- **There is a strong sense of collective responsibility, with recognition that the public plays a key role in the fight against terror**
  - 79% agree that it is not just the responsibility of the police to deal with any potential terrorist issues
  - 83% agree that it is important communities work together to prevent terrorism

- **Many have a limited understanding of what constitutes suspicious behaviour, or potential signs to look out for**
  - Over half (54%) claimed to have never come across suspicious behaviour/activity
  - Many struggled to identify suspicious signs beyond abandoned bags. When unprompted, the top mentioned suspicious activity was unattended bags/suspect packages (19%)
  - 18% say they do not notice suspicious behaviour because they do not know what to look for

- **Activity or behaviour that is out of the ordinary is unlikely to be attributed to terrorism, particularly from friends and family**
  - 39% say it is hard to differentiate suspicious behaviour/activity related to terrorism from other strange behaviour and 19% believe no one they know would be involved in any suspicious activities

- **Suspicious activity online is particularly likely to be overlooked across all age groups**
  - Qualitatively, it was found that suspicious behaviour online is especially difficult to identify, often being dismissed as 'banter' or a 'bit of fun'
  - There is a feeling that everyone is entitled to their opinion, and that the social media platform will deal with any potential issues

---

[1] Percentages based on all adults aged 18+ in England, Wales and Scotland (base size 2198) unless otherwise stated.

- From the scenarios provided in the survey, online behaviours such as having two online identities or being secretive about online activity were in the top 5 behaviours/activities viewed as not suspicious in relation to potential terrorist activity

- **Fear of being wrong and wasting police time are key barriers to reporting. Many require a tangible link to terrorism before reporting**
  - 25% have come across suspicious behaviour but did not consider reporting. This is higher amongst 18-34 year olds (32%)
  - Many are likely to rationalise the behaviour before considering reporting, believing there could be an innocent explanation for the behaviour/activity (27%)
  - There was also the worry about wasting police time, particularly if unsure that the suspicious behaviour is in fact linked to terrorism in some way. 26% of respondents said they might not report suspicious behaviour as they wouldn't want to be seen as wasting police time. This barrier is particularly strong amongst females (30%) vs. males (22%).
  - 29% of respondents said they might not report suspicious behaviour in case they suspicions were incorrect

- **Fear of repercussions from friends, family and local community may discourage those considering reporting, particularly among BME participants**
  - Quantitatively, potentially betraying a friend did not emerge as a strong barrier to reporting (2%)
  - However, delving deeper in qualitative discussions revealed that many would fear repercussions resulting from reporting a friend
  - Teens in particular worry about the impact on a friendship if the person finds out that they reported them, fearing intimidation and retaliation as a result
  - Qualitatively it was also found that Muslim and BME participants experience certain barriers more strongly including concerns around anonymity and fear of unfair treatment by police (of themselves or the accused)

- **There is low awareness of existing anti-terror campaigns and appropriate reporting channels**
  - 16% say they have seen any counter terrorism comms in the past 12 months
  - There was 4% prompted campaign recognition for the red button campaign, and 11% for Run, Hide, Tell
  - 25% said they were aware of the ATH when prompted, but only 15% said they might use it
  - Prompted awareness of the Red Stop Button was lower at 5%

- **The power to prevent a terror attack and the consequences of failure to act are key motivators to report**
  - 12% claim to have ever reported something deemed to be suspicious
  - The top motivator to reporting was knowing a report could prevent a terror attack (53%) followed by having the power to prevent a terror attack that may threaten the safety of friends and loved ones (49%)

- o 46% also said there would be a strong feeling of guilt knowing that a terror attack went ahead and suspicions hadn't been reported

- **Messaging should provide examples of suspicious scenarios and help lower the bar for what is deemed worthy of reporting**
  - o Many are unsure if a report would be taken seriously, particularly if they can't prove a link to terrorism.

OVERALL IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMS

- Increase knowledge of what to look for

- Emphasise that reporting without a clear link to terrorism is OK

- Provide reassurances around anonymity and fair treatment by Police

- Normalise reporting

- Leverage collective responsibility and empowerment to prevent an attack

- Make reporting frictionless

- Tap into online as a widely used source of information

- Ensure a clear and consistent call to action