



Home Secretary & Minister for Security

Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary & Minister for Security

I am writing to request a meeting on the urgent need for the implementation of business licensing within the private security sector. This step is critical for addressing longstanding challenges within the industry, and has widespread support from reputable operators. As one of the key recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry (MR8), business licensing would establish a minimum standard for security businesses, promote public confidence, and enhance oversight, helping to ensure the highest levels of safety and professionalism at a pivotal moment for the sector.

As you are aware, the current regulatory framework, introduced over 20 years ago, primarily focuses on licensing individual operatives rather than businesses. This approach leaves the sector exposed to significant risks, particularly as the role of private security in supporting public safety continues to expand, including its alignment with Martyn's Law.

With over 500,000 licensed security operatives across the UK, it is concerning that up to one in four could be affected by the gaps in the current system. Compounding this issue is the estimated 12,000 security supply businesses that remain untraceable by central Government Departments, such as HMRC and the Security Industry Authority (SIA). This lack of traceability undermines public safety, facilitates exploitation, and allows serious organised crime groups to operate unchecked.

Additionally, the absence of business licensing has led to significant revenue losses for the Government. Non-payment of taxes and benefit fraud within the sector is estimated to cost the Government an estimated £1 billion annually. Business licensing would address this by providing HMRC with greater visibility, ensuring all operators contribute their fair share. The tax benefits alone make this reform a compelling financial opportunity, and extensive groundwork has already been laid with HMRC to support this initiative.

Public safety and confidence are at stake, especially given the rollout of Martyn's Law and its implications for counter-terrorism efforts and violence against women and girls. Business licensing would set a



baseline for how security organisations operate, addressing the lack of accountability and standards that currently erodes trust. Private security increasingly fills gaps left by stretched policing resources, often operating in high-risk environments with complex and diverse threats to the UK.

In its current form, the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) is inadequate, with fewer than 800 businesses participating, while over 12,000 remain outside its scope. This disparity highlights significant discrepancies in standards and tax contributions. ACS-accredited businesses contribute over £1.2 billion in tax revenue annually, while non-participating businesses contribute only £260 million. Business licensing would ensure consistency and create a level playing field, enhancing the integrity of the sector and addressing loopholes that allow unscrupulous operators to thrive.

The security industry is increasingly exploited by organised crime groups, who leverage weak regulation to evade HMRC, abuse immigration laws, and breach Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) standards. These activities harm local communities and fund further illicit enterprises, stretching the resources of multiple agencies. Unregulated operators undermine public safety and Border Force efforts by exploiting Tier 4 student visas, among other loopholes. A robust licensing system would eliminate such abuses, closing gaps that have long been exploited.

While initial investment in business licensing would be required, these costs would be recouped through fees paid by security organisations to operate legally. Such a system would generate long-term savings for taxpayers by reducing investigative costs for agencies including Border Force, GLAA, HMRC, and the SIA. Furthermore, shifting the SIA's focus from 500,000 individual licences to around 10,000 business licences would simplify compliance monitoring, reducing administrative burdens and improving effectiveness.

This reform offers an opportunity to replace the individual licensing scheme with a dual system of business licensing and individual registration. Frontline staff would remain registered to ensure training standards, but their registration would be linked to licensed security organisations. This approach would enhance regulatory oversight while providing a more manageable and cost-effective solution for government departments.

Finally, the timing is critical as the SIA transitions to its new role as the regulator for Protect Duty. This juncture offers the ideal opportunity to strengthen the regulatory framework, ensuring it aligns with our shared goals of public safety, counter-terrorism, and economic integrity.

Given the urgency of these concerns, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the implementation of business licensing for the private security sector.

This reform is essential not only for public safety but also for restoring confidence, ensuring equitable taxation, and combating exploitation and fraud.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss it further.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Kill Chair UKDSA / CEO NTIA



Satia Rai CEO IPSA



Annie Marie Chebib Chairperson UKCMA



Graham Bassett Chair City Security Council



Mike Reddington - CEO BSIA



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