



UNITED KINGDOM

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

GENERAL

TRAINING

WORKING TIME

CONDITIONS OF WORK

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) is, arguably, the largest and most influential employers' organisation in the industry. It was established in 1968 by a few of the main companies in the industry as a trade association⁽¹⁾ and grew gradually with its first Chief Executive appointed in 1986. It currently has about 500 organisations in membership in 12 sections representing the various segments of the security market with around 100 of those organisations joining in the past year.

A second large organisation, the Joint Security Industry Council (JSIC) is a confederation of trade associations, clients and others including the Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the BSIA, and, more recently, but not particularly actively, the two major unions in the industry.

The GMB is the General, Municipal & Boilermakers' Union. It is one of the four largest trade unions in the UK. It is a general union and organises in a wide range of private and public sectors. It is the principal union in the private security industry. The TGWU is the Transport & General Workers' Union. It is also a general union organising across many public and private sectors. It is not as prominent in the private security industry as the GMB but is the principal union for security staff in seven regional airports in the UK.

There is no central register of security organisations and it is almost impossible to identify the number of companies and operatives in existence at any one time. One employer estimated there might be more than 1000 companies and up to 150,000 operatives. Another source suggested there were as many as «200,000 so called security operatives within the boundary of the M25 motorway surrounding Greater London and its environs». Another employer representative commented, «it is said that there are 1500 companies in the manned guarding sector but I'm hard pressed to name 150».

Many small organisations come into existence, are short lived and disappear. One national trade union official said «it's possible for someone to come out of prison get themselves a dog and a van and set themselves up as a security company». An employer observed that «a major problem is the low cost of entry into the industry. You can put on a suit or a uniform, get a van and a dog and call yourself a security company».

The Security Industry Authority, established under the Security Industry Act, for the purpose of establishing a regulatory framework for the industry may, in time, through its licensing processes and approved company scheme, be able to produce accurate statistics.

(1) A trade association is a professional association of companies seeking to represent the interests of those companies in relation to government policy, consumers, and the wider society. Such associations may seek to influence standards within the industry, offer various services such as training and product advice and promotion to its members and organise trade exhibitions and seminars. It is significantly different from employers' organisations, such as the Engineering Employers' Federation, which engage in processes of consultation and negotiation with trade unions representing the employees in an industry.

Principal legislation and collective agreements in the sector

The employment relationship in the security industry is governed by the legislation applying to all workers. The primary legal relationship between employee and employer is the contract of employment. This takes its content from a variety of sources including legislation, company rules and procedures, collective agreements and custom and practice.

In the United Kingdom collective agreements between the employer and the trade unions are not legally enforceable. However, many terms and conditions contained within collective agreements can be incorporated into the individual contract of employment and are capable of being enforced in law.

There are no national or company-wide agreements in the security industry. Where agreements exist they are at site level. Trade union membership in the industry is limited to a few large national companies except in the airport sector where security staff tend to be organised by those unions who have membership among the rest of the airport staff.

The Security Industry Act, 2001

The new legislation was introduced to deal with many of the problems in the sector. It is unlikely to be fully in force before 2004 but has been welcomed by the unions and major employers in the industry.

The definition of the private security sector

- uniformed guarding
- patrolling and remote security of premises and events
- criminal justice support services, including owning and operating prisons and detention centres and escorting prisoners
- providing escorts for cash and property movements
- importation, design, manufacture, installation and maintenance of security systems.

Conditions governing the operation of companies

In outline, the new Act requires individuals to have a licence but does not require the licensing of companies. The Act proposes a voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme whereby individual companies can apply to be inspected by the Security Industry Authority. The process of licensing involves full criminal record checks on all persons engaged in the industry. The Approved Contractor Scheme is aimed at giving clients confidence that companies meet the requirements of the legislation. The head of the organisation should regularly communicate information to the SIA (Security Industry Authority), which sends an annual report to the Home Office.

Criteria for staff recruitment

Staff must have a three year licence which costs the worker between £35 (52 euros) and £40 (59 euros).

Criminal records are controlled. There are no measures relating to age.

The new regulations have consequences for in-house employees who are not required to have a licence but, where their jobs are transferred to the private sector through a sub-contract, one is required.

Entry qualifications

None.

Initial training in job role and continuing training

Competence-based qualifications - National Vocational Qualifications, (NVQs)⁽²⁾ - are available in the industry but it is estimated that fewer than 10% of the workforce have attained NVQ level 2.

Training in small to medium size companies is practically non-existent.

Some of the larger organisations provide a limited amount of training. This can involve up to five days with two days off-the-job and three days on-the-job.

Topics include basic skills in handling emergencies, perhaps control room technology, and sometimes training linked to client needs such as «retail meeters and greeters».

Training organisations

The Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO), the wholly owned training subsidiary of BSIA, is a National Training Organisation (NTO) for the security industry and provides access to training opportunities and appropriate national vocational qualifications.

The financing of training

There is no sector-wide system for financing training.

Evaluation and recognition of training

There are no mechanisms for this.

(2) NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) are work-based qualifications which enable candidates to demonstrate what they can do, using skills, knowledge and experience rather than testing knowledge only. Candidates work towards the qualification by demonstrating to an independent assessor that they can meet the standards required. There are five levels of NVQ. Level 1 is foundation level covering routine work under supervision. Level 2 involves work having some individual and collaborative responsibility. Level 3 covers work at a technical or supervisory level. Level 4 is for more complex activities such as those equating with a junior management or technician level. NVQ Level 5 is equivalent to university degrees and professional qualifications.

Hours of work

The Working Time Regulations of 1998 state that no worker should work more than 48 hours per week over a period of 17 to 26 weeks. Individual workers and companies in certain circumstances can opt out of this requirement. At present within the private security industry companies have a derogation to operate 12 hour shifts and individual employees have been required to opt-out of the regulations limiting the length of the working week.

Overtime working

There are no sectoral level agreements on overtime working.

Annual holidays (paid leave)

All workers in the UK have a legal entitlement to 4 weeks paid holiday per year plus up to 11 statutory days for festive and other calendar dates.

There is an entitlement to maternity, paternity and parental leave.

Flexible working (hours of work, standby)

There are no sectoral agreements.

Health and Safety

There are no sectoral level agreements containing measures concerning uniforms and carrying arms. No arm possession.

Job progression and career development

There are no sectoral level agreements.

Wages

There is a statutory National Minimum Wage introduced through legislation in 1998. At present all adult workers have the right to a minimum wage of £4.20 (6,19 euros) per hour. Workers between the ages of 18 and 21 years of age can be paid a Development Rate of £3.60 (5,31 euros) per hour. This is an age-related rate and is not linked to training. Older workers can also be paid the Development Rate of £3.60 (5,31 euros) per hour in their first six months of employment with a new employer, provided they receive training to recognised standards. Workers under the age of 18 are not covered by the NMW.

Wages for operatives in the private security security are around £5.00 (7,37 euros) per hour.

Monthly minimum wages 1.124 euros (Eurostat 2002).

Types of employment contract

There are no sectoral level collective agreements. Contracts are established between the individual employee and the employer.

Turn-over

The problems of low wages and long hours are reflected in the statistics for labour turnover in the industry. The best estimates for labour turnover are in the region of 65% per annum for the industry as a whole. Even in relatively well managed companies turnover approaches 35%.

Equal opportunities

All employees have the right not to be unfairly dismissed, or to suffer sex, race or disability discrimination.

Security of employment

TUPE stands for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981. These were introduced in order to implement EC Directive N0.77/187, commonly called the «Acquired Rights Directive». This means that where an in-house service is sub-contracted to another employer, the employees retain their existing terms and conditions of employment.

Safety, stress, and psychological support

There are no sectoral level provisions.

There are no sectoral level provisions. The BSIA believe that there is a need to generate greater value from security operations.

There is some scope for using technology in guarding assignments. The BSIA believe that about 40 per cent of existing assignments could be replaced by a system of «technology plus response». This would allow security guards, backed up by electronic surveillance, to communicate with an

operator in a central control office, who could alert police to security breaches. This would improve response times and reduce the level of risk to individual security officers.

