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In October 2010, the Government announced a “phased transition to a new regulatory regime” for the private security industry. The new regulatory regime will allow greater transparency and accountability so that the industry can have greater responsibility for, and involvement in, regulation. The Government’s deregulatory objective is to ensure businesses are not overburdened by regulation and red tape. Ultimately this will lower the overall cost and burden of regulation on the industry and deliver better value for money.

Some of the proposed reforms that the Government would like to undertake are reliant on changes using new (primary) legislation, which is not yet available. Therefore, we expect that the regulatory reforms will be in two phases. The first phase, introducing the proposals outlined in this factsheet, can be achieved using existing legislation. However, phase two reforms, such as changes to the status of the SIA and enhanced enforcement powers for the SIA, will require new legislation. Although the Government is committed to such regulation, there is currently no date for when new legislation will be ready. We will communicate further details on phase two reforms when they are available.

In November 2012, the Home Office published a public consultation document on the future regulatory regime for the private security industry. The consultation document was developed in partnership with industry representatives via a strategic consultation group, chaired by the SIA. It reflects input and feedback from many workshops and meetings held around the country. The consultation closed in January 2013, and received nearly 800 responses. A summary of responses will be published by the Home Office later this year.

The Scottish Government and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland have not yet decided whether they will adopt the changes proposed in the consultation. They are taking part in the consultation to ensure that the views of those who live and work in Scotland and Northern Ireland can be taken into account. However, both the Scottish Government and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland have indicated that they are supportive of a consistent UK-wide regulatory regime for the private security industry.

What’s happening to the SIA?

We continue to regulate the private security industry across the United Kingdom, helping to reduce criminality, raise standards, and to recognise quality service through the Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS).

We are also continuing to make improvements to our individual licensing processes and online facilities to deliver a faster and simpler service to our customers.

At the same time, we continue to work with the industry, police, government, and other stakeholders to develop arrangements for the new regulatory regime.

How will the private security industry be regulated in the future?

The Government intends to introduce regulation that is primarily focussed on regulating security businesses, although individuals will still be licensed. The Home Office and the SIA are working together so that legislation will be in place by the end of the year. This will allow the SIA to begin to regulate businesses in spring 2014. Regulation by the SIA will continue to protect the public and penalties for non-compliance will remain.

So what's the difference between the current regime and the future proposals?

Business Regulation - The big difference is that the SIA will regulate *businesses* operating in designated areas of the private security industry. It will be a criminal offence for a business to provide a security service unless the business is approved to do so by the SIA. The SIA will publish an online register of regulated businesses.

Businesses will need to demonstrate that they meet the regulation criteria and comply with certain terms and conditions, which will include conformance with the relevant British Standards.

Proposals include that the terms and conditions of business regulation will require a business to ensure a licence application process is carried out for its employees that confirms an employee's identity, address history, qualifications, and right to work in the UK. This may be through an SIA trusted partner; either the company itself (subject to a specific approval) or by an approved third party.

Consideration will be given to the needs of small and micro businesses. This will benefit them and ensure that they meet the standards needed for public safety.

Individual Licensing – Individuals operating in designated areas of the private security industry will still need to hold an SIA licence. The SIA will continue to publish an online register of licence holders.

Mostly, new applicants will apply for their licence through an SIA trusted partner; either their employer, where the employer is appointed to do so, or an organisation appointed by the SIA to validate documents, check photographs, accept payment, and to submit checked licence applications to the SIA.

The only checks on individuals that would continue to be the responsibility of the SIA would be those in relation to criminality.

Individuals renewing their licence will be able to use the SIA's online 'self-service' facility.

What else will the SIA do?

The SIA will still set and ensure licensing standards for individuals and will apply the standards for industry qualifications.

The SIA will process licence applications, conduct criminality checks, issue licences, and run online registers of licensed individuals and regulated businesses.

The SIA will continue to make greater use of online technology and will increase the use of e-channels, which will result in more automation, less paperwork, and a faster, more efficient and more cost-effective service. Individuals will be able to do more online, through the SIA's online self-service facilities, where they will be able to manage their personal details and renew their licences. This will allow the SIA to phase out the less efficient and more expensive paper and telephone based services we currently use.

The SIA will still have powers to enforce the law and will still work closely with partners such as the police, but the industry will have more responsibility and the industry will be encouraged to raise business standards and individual competence.

What about training for an individual SIA licence?

The Private Security Industry Act 2001 requires the SIA to set and approve standards for training, but development of competency specifications has always been undertaken in consultation with stakeholders and based on industry best practice. This means that standards are protected and industry continues to have a say in setting the training requirement for a licence. This helps ensure that training is relevant and meaningful for individuals and reflects industry requirements.

How much will it cost?

A key requirement of the SIA is that our income must match the cost of regulation. We will continue to embrace technology, make savings, and reduce our expenditure, therefore reducing the overall cost of regulation. We reduced our fees in 2012 and we will seek further opportunities to do so in the future.

We intend for our fees for the new regime to be clear and fair, and to spread the cost of regulation between businesses and individuals, so that all businesses and individuals contribute to the cost of their regulation.

We propose that businesses pay an application fee and an annual subscription fee based on the size of the business. The cost for individual licensing is expected to be lower than the current levels.

The application fees and subscription rates will be set by the Government and have yet to be determined. There will be proper consultation with the industry on fees. We anticipate that when the new system is introduced, allowances will be made for any time remaining on an existing individual licence.

What will happen to the Approved Contractor Scheme?



The industry has invested a great deal of time and effort in the ACS, and many buyers (including many government organisations) require their security suppliers to be an ACS company. Industry investment in the ACS will be protected.

We expect that ACS businesses will be best placed to be compliant with the business regulation requirements, ensuring that ACS companies can apply successfully to be a regulated business. However, in the future, a voluntary approvals scheme may not be run by the SIA. Responsibility could be transferred to an industry-led organisation and it would be left to the industry to decide how to set and apply such a scheme. This would require new legislation, which is not yet in place.

What happens during the move to a new regulatory regime?

There will be a managed transition to any new regime, and both individuals and businesses will have plenty of time to adjust. We will communicate widely any changes to the current regime, but we encourage you to register with us to receive our regular updates.

What do I do now?

Until you are notified by the SIA, everything remains the same – regulation by the SIA is still in place and must be adhered to. We will inform individuals and businesses of what needs to be done nearer the time. Meanwhile, you can get up to date information on a future regulatory regime for the private security industry through the following channels:

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