

Buying on approval

by **Jonathan Levine**, Managing Director, First Security (Guards)

The 20th March 2006 was billed by the industry, or at least by those specifically working in the manned guarding industry, as a momentous day. It was the day that SIA licences became a legal requirement for security personnel (supplied under contract) working in Security Guarding, Cash & Valuables in Transit, Public Space Surveillance CCTV, Key Holding and Close Protection environments.

The Private Security Industry Act 2001 paved the way for the establishment of an Approved Contractor Scheme, a voluntary system of inspection of providers of security services, with the aim of giving purchasers, and the public, the confidence that a security firm is reputable and has adopted proven good practice in all key areas of their business.

On 21st March, the SIA published a list of the first 58 companies to achieve 'Approved Contractor' status, among them, First Security. It meant that we had satisfied the relevant authorities in terms of meeting certain agreed standards, could register ourselves as approved, and advertise the fact to our customers and potential customers.

Companies achieving ACS status are permitted to deploy a percentage of their security personnel who are not yet licensed by the SIA but who have completed their training, achieved their qualification and have had their licence application accepted by the SIA for processing. In terms of percentages, to be an Approved Contractor companies had to have 50% of their officers licensed by the March deadline, and 85% of their officers licensed by 31st May 2006. Officers whose applications have been accepted and are being processed are allowed to operate under what is called a Licence Dispensation Notice (LDN).

But what does it actually all mean?

Organisations that meet the requirements of the Approved Contractor Scheme can distinguish themselves as being amongst the best providers of private security services in



John Saunders of the SIA, Jonathan Levine, and Steven Moir, Corporate Assurance Manager at FSG recognising First Security's Approved Contractor status

England and Wales. That is what the hyperbole will tell you. But how do we convey to potential purchasers of manned guarding services that being an Approved Contractor means so much more than just an attractive certificate on the boardroom wall?

I have said before and I will say again that the amount of training now required is still woefully inadequate. It doesn't even begin to compare with the volume of training that officers receive in Scandinavia, and, fundamentally, there is nothing here that good, professional manned guarding companies haven't been doing for many years – and in many cases a great deal more besides.

In Sweden, for example, security officers undergo in excess of 200 hours of training. By comparison, the industry's 32 hours of training pales into insignificance. Many of the good manned guarding companies (and we rightfully include ourselves in this group) already provide not only the 'basic' training required, but also additional courses (Customer Care, Supervisors Courses, General Management courses, First Aid, etc) as well as training bespoke to specific sites. The 'good' companies have been involved and engaged in the wider industry initiatives such as Operation Griffin, sharing information, knowledge and best-practice between end-users and their providers to make London safer from terrorist attack.

Accreditation as an Approved Contractor doesn't make the best companies instantly better, but what it does do is provide tangible evidence of a company's expertise. An Approved Contractor is audited not just on the direct service it provides, but more the total performance of the organisation based on nine criteria. The ACS model works on the premise that excellent people, customers and social responsibility are achieved through "fit and proper" leadership driving strategy, and that strategy is delivered through people, commercial relationships, resources and processes.

The true measure of the ACS model's effectiveness is in its use as a management system, and the associated growth in the key management discipline of organisation self-assessment. The ACS Self Assessment Workbook (SAW) is a practical tool to helping organisations to do this by measuring where they are on the path of Security provider excellence, helping them understand the gaps, and offering solutions. The beauty of the ACS standard is that it is applicable to organisations irrespective of size and structure.

The scale of the task in becoming an Approved Contractor, especially for those larger organisations, cannot be over-estimated. Putting the investment in place early was key, as was careful planning especially in terms of logistics. There are a few big names missing from the Approved Contractor

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First boosts security at the New British Library for a very special visit.

FIRST SECURITY

wins new shopping centre contract

First Security has won a significant new contract to protect the Edmonton Green Shopping Centre in Enfield, North London, one of two Shopping Centres it protects for the property development company St. Modwen Properties Plc.

The contract, managed by St. Modwen Developments (Edmonton) Ltd, is to provide a team of security personnel "to provide a safe and pleasant environment for both shoppers and retailers alike," according to Colin Chatt, Property Manager (London and South East).

The team – comprising nine officers who will liaise closely with the local Police Force – has been briefed not only to provide a security service, but also an element of customer care. The team will also be responsible for operating the sophisticated CCTV system that the Shopping Centre has installed, and patrolling the adjoining car park.

First Security was awarded the contract – against fierce competition – "because it has a proven track record in retail security services," adds Mr Chatt. "First Security was able to put an innovative package of services and costs together which precisely matched our requirements. We have worked with First Security before but their services are continually benchmarked," he says. "We always go to competitive tender, and they constantly provide value added service which beats other suppliers not only on cost but provided services.

"First Security is one of a few companies that does what it says in its marketing portfolio. It takes a pro-active approach to security and has the support of a strong management team."

Edmonton Green Shopping Centre is currently nearing the end of the first phase of a major redevelopment programme including the construction of additional retail and residential units, primary care centre, bus station and leisure centre.

Jonathan Levine, Managing Director of First Security concludes: "We are delighted to have won this contract but never rest on our laurels. Selecting the officers most suited to a Shopping Centre environment is a significant part of our continued success."



Buying on approval (cont.)

list, but perhaps that isn't surprising. What is surprising, however, are the opportunities that are already resulting from those that are approved to take over sites from companies that do not have the requisite licenses in place. Anyone working on site without a licence – or without an LDN – is now working illegally, and for those who thought the day would never come, the unpalatable reality is now striking home.

The challenge, of course, is what next?

The Approved Contractor Scheme gives all of us involved the impetus for further improvement. Recruitment, training and retention of quality officers are imperative, and investment in areas such as Human Resources – and

top-class management support – will become even more important in the months ahead.

What the Approved Contractor Scheme has done perhaps above all else, is give credibility to those professionals working in our industry. An Approved Contractor is independently audited, measured, and benchmarked against the very best. Personally speaking, I believe it has done wonders for our team morale, knowing that we have been pitted against the best, and not found wanting. To that end, the work of the SIA and support of the BSIA is to be applauded. But for the scheme to have real meaning, enforcement is now essential. Licensing and the Approved Contractor Scheme are but the first steps in a very long climb to take our industry to the pinnacle of excellence.

Exceptional Efforts recognised by First Security

FIRST SECURITY has named Gary Hayes and Keith Walter as joint winners of its Security Officer of the Year Award for 2005, and officers of the British Medical Association (BMA) as Team of the Year after their highly commendable efforts following the London bombings of July last year.

Although Gary and Keith work on different contracts they were in the same building – Lynton House, Tavistock Square – on the 7th July. Gary Hayes, who has been First Security Officer for over seven years was working in Lynton House on behalf of Yorke Property Management. After the Tavistock Square bomb he turned the reception area into a makeshift casualty department and



Jonathan Levine with Gary Hayes, commended for his actions on 7th July

administered first aid to those who were injured. He also organised hot drinks for both casualties and members of the emergency services and efficiently kept First Security Control fully abreast of developments as they occurred.

Keith Walter was also at Lynton House providing security to Edexcel employees. Following the bombing he assisted in the evacuation of the 50 Edexcel employees and then provided additional support to the First Security team at the British Medical Association (BMA) before escorting the Edexcel staff to their H.Q. at High Holborn. First Security's Team of the Year award went to officers at

the BMA, based at Tavistock Square. Terry Hughes, the team's Supervisor, played a leading role in the emergency procedures and supported the officers through the traumatic events in very professional and calm manner.

The Award presentations were made at First Security's annual lunch in London in December. Kevin McMahon, Director of Resources at the BMA and Patrick Reed, Head of Security commended everyone's efforts on the day.

Jonathan Levine, Managing Director of First Security, commented on this year's awards: "It always gives me great pleasure to present our Officer and Team of the Year awards as it goes some way towards demonstrating how much we value our officers, especially those who go above and beyond the call of duty. Following the dreadful events of July 7th it is only right that these officers are formally acknowledged for their dedication and professionalism. Security officers across London played a vital role on the day and they kept their heads in difficult and exceptional circumstances.

"These officers made exceptional efforts and displayed great qualities on the day, whether it was co-ordinating emergency activities, maintaining vital communications or providing very welcome support to all those involved."



Jonathan Levine with Keith Walter, who assisted in the evacuation of 50 Edexcel employees

Credit where credit is due

In the latest of our customer interviews, First Choice's **Sean Feast** speaks to **Trevor Gannon**, Director of Corporate Security at Credit Suisse.



SF How did you come to be involved in security?

TG In 1986 I saw an advertisement for the Corps of Commissionaires who were seeking former military and police personnel for a new security contract working for Broadgate Estates in the City of London and decided to give it a try. I worked there for a number of years, reaching supervisory management level, and subsequently joined Credit Suisse 15 years ago. I have been in my current role, responsible for directing Corporate Security in Europe, the Middle East and Africa for the last five years.

SF Do you think that having been involved as an officer 'on the front line' gives you an advantage today?

TG Most definitely. I can look them in the eye and say that I started where they are today. I know how tough the job can be. But I also know that if you're willing to learn and be prepared to knuckle down, then there are tremendous opportunities. It's the same in any corporate environment. You may start as a junior but it is always possible to work your way to the top. You need to set a goal of what you want to achieve. When I started, even if you wanted to progress, there was very little available in the way of training. Now it's different. One of the main things we have been working on as a team over the last five years is making sure we invest in the best training available. We have also focused on getting our working conditions right – a 42 hour week and eight-hour shifts – as well as providing good rates of pay and annual performance incentives. We have made significant investment in demonstrating our commitment to improving working conditions and standards.

SF So you see your officers as very much part of the company?

TG Yes. I like to take a partnership approach with First Security. All of our officers are professionals and an integral part of our company ethos. They are treated with the same respect as any other member of staff. Some time ago, our officers wore a uniform. This has since changed to smart suits, all designed to enhance the professional image. What we have found is that this approach reflects the Bank's dignity at work policies. Our officers wear name badges now, which also helps for a more personal, approachable relationship.

SF What is your view on licensing?

TG We have always been strong advocates of licensing. Approximately five years ago, we hired David Sayner as Vice President because of his commercial background working in the manned guarding industry. What we were seeing then in the manned guarding industry was an industry where under-investment was rife, where companies were continually trying to under-cut one another to win contracts and officers were being given no opportunities to progress. We set about completing a training review to identify our training gaps and needs, and subsequently identified that our best course of action was to have our own dedicated training manager who was capable of remaining current with operational developments whilst training our security officers. The training manager has been with us for two years now and delivers all our primary and secondary training modules. What licensing is achieving is a minimum requirement in terms of training, greater due-diligence on the individuals employed, and a real improvement in the quality of officers available. The industry needed a shake-up, and with licensing and the Approved Contractor Scheme, it has had it. We are not resting on our laurels however. As licensing came into force we have already begun our second training review and are nearing the completion of the critical task analysis phase. We intend to constantly stay ahead of the game, there can be no room for complacency in our industry.

SF How will licensing affect service providers?

TG I expect the number of providers to contract. What we are seeing at the moment are 'bounty hunters' trying to poach licensed staff. Companies that failed to

make adequate investment, or who wrongly thought that the implementation of the new regulation would be delayed are trying to buy their way out of trouble by offering incentives for officers (with licences) to join them. We have talked to all of our staff and explained our position and vision regarding our continued investment in people. We can look to our track record – how we treat our officers, the pay conditions, hours, demonstrate our commitment to them, and hopefully allay any anxiety they may have about the changes. Security Officers have to ask themselves, if the company that is trying to 'buy' them now wasn't prepared to invest in their development at the time, then how likely are they to invest in them in the future?

SF Do you think 32 hours training is enough?

TG No, but it is a step in the right direction. I would like to see us head towards the Scandinavian model, where officers get access to more than 200 hours of training, there are security academies, and officers aren't allowed anywhere near a site until they are properly qualified, however I believe that a more graduated training model would be better suited to our requirements.

SF Can 'manned guarding' ever be seen as a career?

TG Why not? If you asked me is it a career today, is it something that someone at university looks at as a profession then perhaps not. But that doesn't have to be the case in the future. This is where the wider security industry must play a greater part. They must do more in promoting the industry in a positive light. They don't 'sell' the job very well, or explain what is involved to attract people from more diverse backgrounds. I thought it was particularly disappointing after the London Bombings in July last year that not a lot of recognition was given to security officers and the role they played on the day.

SF Away from security/work, what do you like to do?

TG Away from work I like nothing better than to take my mountain bike out with friends in Epping Forest, near to where I live. It helps keep me fit, and so far I haven't broken my neck!

Credit Suisse annual security awards

Security officers at Credit Suisse have had their exceptional efforts and outstanding service recognised through a new annual award scheme introduced in 2005.

There are 75 officers in total, working across three buildings in teams of 15 to secure the premises 24/7, 365 days a year.

Chas Varailon has been a Security Officer at Credit Suisse since October 2002, during this time he has demonstrated a great deal of professionalism and amassed a wealth of knowledge of, not only the security industry, but also Credit Suisse. He was nominated by his Team Manager for the

Security Officer of the Year Award for his continued outstanding security service to the firm.

The award specifically recognises the motivation, dedication and loyalty demonstrated by an individual throughout the year. In nominating Chas, his team manager Andrew Mason said: "He is an excellent example of an officer who drives himself rather than demands to be driven."

Lee Harvey, was presented with an award for the Most Improved Security Officer of the Year and has worked on site at Credit Suisse since 2001. In 2005, his Team Manager,

John Purcell has been working closely with Lee in his personal development. Commenting on his development, he said: "Lee has matured, become more focused in every aspect of his job and is a pleasure to work with."

The Awards were made at a Presentation Ceremony at Credit Suisse in April. Trevor Gannon, Director of Corporate Security at Credit Suisse said: "We have established these awards to recognise and commend the efforts of the Security Officers. They are an integral part of Credit Suisse and this deserves to be formally recognised."

Hold the **Front Page**

In May, more than 20 additional security officers from First Security were drafted in to help the existing team with a very special visit by Her Majesty The Queen to the New British Library for the opening of a new exhibition celebrating 100 years of the British Newspaper (1906 – 2006).

The enormous changes in news-gathering, reporting and newspaper production over the past century are imaginatively unfolded in the exhibition through a selection of front pages from 1906-2006. These have been arranged into themes ranging from royalty, society, scandal, sport and celebrations through to war, disasters and assassinations.

The chosen front pages and themes serve primarily as a backdrop to illustrate how and why reporting on those topics has changed, rather than being a history of each topic in the 20th century.

Visitors are able to look behind the headlines to see what the papers say about themselves and their ever-evolving industry. Commentaries from editors and journalists have been written exclusively for the exhibition and will be published in a specially-commissioned commemorative newspaper. These provide fascinating insight into the decision-making process behind the headlines and include contributions from Robert

Warren on World War One and World War Two, Frederick Forsyth on assassinations, Lord Bill Deedes on politics and Kelvin MacKenzie on the tabloids.

The display will also remind visitors of some of the headlines that have become legendary in their own right for a variety of reasons: These include the 1912 Daily Mirror headline "Titanic sunk – no lives lost"; the Daily Mirror's 1939 Hitler headline "Wanted for Murder...for kidnapping"; The Sun's 1982 headline "Gotcha" about the sinking of the Belgrano in the Falklands War, The Sun's 1986 headline "Freddie Star ate my hamster"; The Sunday Express's 1997 headline "Diana is dead"; and the Independent on Sunday's 2003 headline on Saddam Hussain's weapons of mass destruction, "So where are they Mr Blair?"

The centerpiece of the exhibition is an innovative interactive "newsroom" where visitors can use computers to experience the excitement and pace of a newsroom environment by becoming Editor of their own newspaper. As Editor, they will take on the job of making up a front page on screen, using individual newspaper house styles and choosing from a "jigsaw" databank of prepared stories and photographs, while working to a tight deadline.

The exhibition runs through to October 2006.



(Above) Her Majesty The Queen leaving St Pancras with Murdoch MacLennan, Chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association.

Photo: Peter Warner, British Library

First takes on Commodity Quay for Reuters

First Security has extended its successful relationship with the world-renowned news and information group Reuters by being appointed to provide Reception and Security services at Commodity Quay in London's Docklands.

"The landlord provides a basic level of security, but we were keen to enhance this further with our own team," explains Mick Egdell, Security Manager responsible for Europe, The Middle East and Africa. "We have been working with First Security now since 1988/89, and enjoy an excellent working relationship with them."

First Security provides round-the-clock security at all of Reuters sites, involving more than 70 male and female security personnel including the innovative provision of 24 hour on-site Management, to coordinate and monitor

the contract in such a manner that Reuters are relinquished of the mundane day-to-day activities and related problems.

Commodity Quay is a multi-tenanted building, and formerly home – as the name suggests – to a number of historic commodity traders.

Last year Reuters agreed an unprecedented five-year deal with First Security after it quit its historic Fleet Street headquarters following a 66-year stay, to move the majority of its London staff into the new building at 30, The South Colonnade, Canary Wharf. The move was a significant factor in agreeing such a long-term contract with one of its suppliers, as Mick says: "A move of this magnitude was a huge logistical exercise and we felt that

consistency of service was an important factor in ensuring the security of our new head office."

First Security protects a broad range of landmark buildings including 30 St Mary Axe, headquarters of Swiss Re. Other contracts within Canary Wharf in particular include Barclays Capital – the investment banking division of Barclays Bank PLC, HSBC and Clifford Chance.

Director of operations of FSG Graham Cornwell adds: "We already had a long-established relationship with Reuters, but always need to demonstrate continued improvements and investment in the quality of our service and personnel. These investments have been recognised and rewarded with this new contract which plays to our major strengths."

Security supervisor nominated for industry award for outstanding actions on 7/7

Terry Hughes, a security supervisor from Camden Town, is being considered for an award to be presented by Ken Knight, Commissioner for the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, for his commendable actions on the day of the 7th July London bombings.

Terry has been nominated for "Outstanding Service" as part of the British Security Industry Association's Annual Security Officer Awards. He was working for the British Medical Association (BMA) in their offices in Tavistock Square on the day of the bombings.

Terry was on duty as the site supervisor when the bomb went off on the Number 30 bus, right outside the building.

In traumatic circumstances Terry kept a cool head and helped evacuate the building and gave first aid to the injured, which may well have saved lives. Communications were down, so Terry took on the role of keeping everyone updated with vital information.

Patrick Reed, Head of Security at the BMA, comments: "Terry came to the forefront in very difficult circumstances. He helped doctors to co-ordinate bringing the wounded inside. We aren't a hospital so we had to improvise. 'Above and beyond the call of duty' is an over-used phrase, but it certainly applies in this instance. Other staff were able to take time off to come to terms with what had happened, but Terry was back the next day and

in those weeks following the attack, protecting our building and our people."

The "Outstanding Service" award, sponsored by the Security Industry Authority, was created specifically to recognise those officers who reacted magnificently to the events of 7th July 2005. The BSIA's Annual Security Officer Awards are to take place at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London, and have been running for eight years. They serve to highlight the outstanding contribution of individuals who often go unrecognised for their role in corporate security and community safety.