LEON GUARDING | Security, compliance and risk intelligence from Leon Guarding & FM Limited

Issue 1 | January 2026

LEON INSIDER

WELCOME TO 2026

A new year, and a significant one for our industry. Licensing rules have tightened, the qualifications that underpin every SIA licence are under full review, and Martyn's Law preparation moves from theory to planning. This briefing keeps you ahead of it.

REGULATION | NEW SIA LICENSING CRITERIA NOW IN FORCE

The SIA's updated licensing criteria took effect on 1 December 2025 and now apply to every new application and renewal. It is the most substantial change to licensing decisions in years.

What changed

01

The list of relevant offences has expanded to include human trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, immigration offences, public order offences and tax evasion

02

Overseas criminal record checks extended, with stronger evidence expected from anyone who has lived abroad for six months or more

03

Non-criminal conduct can now count against an application — professional misconduct, regulatory findings, or behaviour damaging to the industry's reputation

3,392

The criteria followed a public consultation that drew 3,392 responses.

What it means for you: vetting outcomes are less predictable than they were. Contractors who vet late or rely on assumption will see more refusals and more gaps in rota cover.

Source: GOV.UK / SIA Get Licensed

LOOKING AHEAD | LICENCE QUALIFICATIONS UNDER REVIEW

The SIA has launched the biggest review of licence-linked qualifications since the regime began. Industry engagement ran from November 2025 to January 2026, with a public consultation due in spring and final specifications in summer 2026. New qualifications become mandatory in spring 2027.

Areas under review include

- physical intervention and stop-and-search skills
- counter-terrorism content aligned to Martyn's Law
- first aid requirements
- English language assessment
- spiking awareness
- guidance on social media auditors and AI

COUNTER-TERRORISM | MARTYN'S LAW: YOUR 2026 PLANNING YEAR

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 received Royal Assent in April 2025. The SIA is the appointed regulator, and commencement is expected in spring 2027. There is no grace period after that date — the implementation period running now is the preparation time.

Three things worth doing this quarter

01 List every premises and event you control and calculate peak capacity including staff

02 Classify each as standard tier (200–799) or enhanced tier (800+)

03 Name a responsible person for each in-scope site

Penalties at commencement: up to £10,000 for standard tier; for enhanced tier, up to £18 million or 5% of worldwide revenue.

ENFORCEMENT FILE | THE COST OF NOT CHECKING A LICENCE

On 26 January 2026, a company director was sentenced at Weymouth Magistrates' Court after deploying a door supervisor whose SIA licence had expired seven months earlier. He received a 12-month community order with 50 hours of unpaid work, having admitted he had not checked the renewal, failed to respond properly to an SIA information request, and misled investigators about the officer's role. The officer himself was also convicted, including an offence under the Fraud Act 2006.

The lesson for buyers: a licence checked at induction is not a licence checked today. Ask your provider how often they verify, and ask them to show you the audit trail.

At Leon Guarding, every officer's SIA licence is verified against the SIA register three times daily through our INDEL workforce platform. A failed check hard-blocks deployment — the officer cannot be booked onto shift until it clears.

BY THE NUMBERS

3,392

responses to the SIA consultation behind the new licensing criteria

Spring 2027

expected commencement of Martyn's Law

£18m or 5%

maximum enhanced-tier penalty for non-compliance

200

the capacity figure that brings a venue into scope

FROM LEON GUARDING

In the community | HOPE Family Barking food bank

Our team's monthly volunteering at the HOPE Family Barking food bank continues into 2026. Every month, Leon Guarding colleagues give their time to help the food bank support local families in need.

PRACTICAL TIP | A FIVE-MINUTE CONTRACT CHECK

Ask your current security provider three questions this month:

01

How often do you verify SIA licences, and can I see the log?

02

Are your officers directly employed, or supplied through agencies?

03

Are you an SIA Approved Contractor, and when was your last ACS audit?

If any answer is vague, that is your risk, not theirs.

Leon Guarding & FM Limited
The Apiary Suite, The Vintry, 53–63 Redbridge Lane East, Ilford, London IG4 5EY
0203 874 4111 | leonguarding.co.uk