

## WILL THERE BE SUFFICIENT TRAINED AND LICENSED SECURITY STAFF TO MEET THE DEMAND IN THE FUTURE?

Following the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, there have been stories published of heroic actions by Security Officers and Door Supervisors who have found themselves at the scene of these horrific events.



These terrible incidents and the current terror threat, has resulted in a surge in the requirement for trained, vetted and SIA licensed Security Officers, especially in the City of London and the large entertainment and sporting events planned throughout the UK during the summer season.

Unfortunately, Security Officers regularly find that they are treated with little respect by the general public and are frequently subject to verbal abuse. Often, they are in a 'no win' situation. Everyone wants to be in a safe, secure environment, however, they do not expect to be challenged or searched themselves and take great exception to this.

A SIA licensed Security Officer receives little training compared with a Police Officer or other members of the emergency services, but they are still expected to react accordingly and deal with any incidents which occur during their shift. During the recent ACS Pacesetters Awards Lunch, the situations that Security Officers and Door Supervisors dealt with were outstanding. They included

dealing with attempted acts of suicide, mass brawls involving weapons, saving the life of a child, suspicious terrorist activity and assisting Police in the arrest of individuals. It is, therefore, sad to say that despite an industry with over 316,000 licensed staff a large proportion of them often go unnoticed, work exceptionally long hours and many are poorly rewarded.

When purchasing security services, the decision is often based on the lowest service charge, with little thought given to the individuals who will actually be responsible for lives and millions of pounds worth of the company's assets when they are the only ones on the premises outside normal working hours. At one time, security was purely a grudge purchase sometimes based on insurance requirements. These days officers are required more than ever to have to face "customers", the public and become enforcers of the various clients and public requirements. This requires different skills and abilities and also increases the 'staff risk' and responsibilities. In turn, remuneration has not risen in line with increased responsibilities and likewise charges have remained static and margins remain low.

If you look at any website of a contract security guarding company they will usually have a long list of vacancies which are available. As the requirement for trained Security staff will, no doubt, increase considerably into the future, the important role that they carry out should be recognised and rewarded accordingly to continue to attract newcomers to the industry. Until the majority of the guarding companies have the foresight to all increase their charges (realistically) then the current situation will not improve and could get worse after Brexit with a lack of applicants.

# NEWS BOARD

## Security Officer of Distinction – Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis from Enigma Security Solutions was awarded one of the ACS Pacesetters Security Officer of Distinction Awards 2017, but was unfortunately unable to attend the presentation at Royal Windsor Racecourse in May. The award was collected on his behalf and Michael has since been presented with this by Sonya Webley, Director – Enigma Security Solutions.



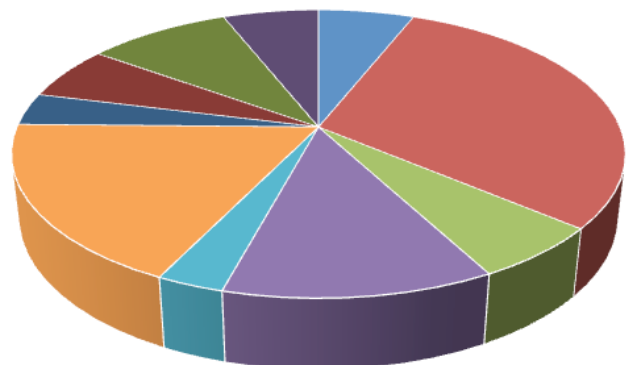
## Silver Fox Audits – The cost-effective method of testing your Site Security.

The Silver Fox Audit, which has been established for 15 years, provides an independent assessment of the security at a wide variety of premises.

We have produced a 'Breakdown by Sector' of the premises which have been audited during the first half of 2017 showing the range of clients we work for. Many of our clients engage us on a regular basis to test their security and meet their compliance requirements.

For further information go to [www.silverfox.org.uk](http://www.silverfox.org.uk) or telephone **01844 260350**.

SILVER FOX AUDITS - BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR



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## Register of Senior Managers and Directors seeking Employment

We currently have individuals registered with us who are seeking senior positions in the Security Industry. They are all experienced individuals who have had a successful career in the industry for a number of years. If you have vacancies available at Management and/or Director level we would be pleased to introduce these applicants to you.

Successful introductions are subject to a small fee which will not exceed 5% of the annual salary.

For further information please contact Lynda Moore by email: [Lynda.moore@fmcontractwatch.co.uk](mailto:Lynda.moore@fmcontractwatch.co.uk)

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# PORTRAIT OF A PACESETTER

## SMARTSEC SOLUTIONS LIMITED

SmartSec Solutions is a specialist provider of high-end security and reception services throughout London and the Home Counties. Current board members and joint owners, Theo Nicolaou and Fawad Ahmad, established the organisation in 2009 with the aim of offering a localised service to a wide variety of businesses. Theo's background and passion is customer service and Fawad has a strong focus in the area of facilities management. Together they have combined their skills, passion and expertise, to form an organisation whose bedrock is the delivery of bespoke solutions which are designed and implemented to meet specific customer needs.

The focus at SmartSec Solutions is quality and investment in staff development which enables the organisation to maintain a reputation for excellence. Customers value their services and enjoy the assurances that they offer.

SmartSec Solutions currently secure over 70 properties with manned guarding or reception services. Many of these are trophy buildings situated across London's beautiful landscape. Their success comes in the form of specialising in what they are great at. Delivering high end solutions in prestigious premises. Presently working with a large number of property and asset management organisations and truly understanding the ever increasing needs of this particular market sector.

However, their real passion and the main ingredient to which they attribute their success comes from the commitment to their teams. Be it staff welfare, cultivating their career paths or just enjoying a social event with the 250 strong personnel, they really do have a passion for people. Working at SmartSec Solutions is not just a job, it is a responsibility, it is being part of a wider goal and it is more importantly being part of a family.

Theo Nicolaou is an ardent believer that relationships are absolutely fundamental. Theo states "what we do, our everyday tasks, be it visiting staff, meeting with customers, or discussing future strategies with potential new customers, nothing comes about without first having built a relationship with that person or that organisation. We drill this important message in to our management team every week. Great relationships underpin everything good that we do here at SmartSec Solutions and will always be at the core and the very heart of this organisation".



Photo shown, Theo Nicolaou MD and Fawad Ahmad Operations Director receiving their ACS Pacesetters Award

# PORTRAIT OF A PACESETTER

## THE PROTECTOR GROUP



### Valleywatch acquired by North East's The Protector Group

FAST-growing North East business The Protector Group has moved into new markets with its purchase of Valleywatch – the firm created 20 years ago to secure one of the country's largest industrial estates.

Lord John Stevens, chairman of Protector, says the acquisition is a crucial cog in the development of the Gateshead business which last year posted record sales of £11.4m. These revenues were over 20% up on 2015 and the purchase of Valleywatch – which manually and electronically protects the Team Valley Trading Estate – opens up the potential to boost revenues further by penetrating the national industrial estate security market, says Lord Stevens. Protector's recent progress has been boosted by the acquisition of Hartlepool business QW Security in 2015 – and staff numbers across the group have risen from 230 to 370 in the last two years. The growth of the company, which is also based on Team Valley, saw it secure a spot in The Journal and Ward Hadaway Fastest 50 in 2016.



Picture: Lord Stevens and Bill Naylor

Lord Stevens, who opened Valleywatch in 1996 when he was Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, said: "We are very pleased to have completed the purchase of this vital and well-respected business. "Our aim is to develop new services and introduce new investment to build upon its long-established monitoring and response operation. Police cuts are supporting the growth of the private security industry and the purchase of Valleywatch means The Protector Group now possesses two control rooms supported by the region's largest mobile response fleet."

Bill Naylor, chairman of Valleywatch and founder of successful commercial property agency Naylors, says it is 'delighted' to have secured such a well-respected suitor. He said: "The Protector Group has great reputation with the backing of well-respected and high-profile individuals. They understand our business and have an ethical approach to business. We like that they are a local company and we feel they are the perfect fit for the business."

Mr Naylor recalled how Valleywatch came into being with the hundreds of businesses on the estate being subject to a spate of burglaries leading to its nickname 'Crime Valley'. A not-for-profit organisation, it was funded by over 100 of the estate's businesses and over the years its manned control room, complete with dozens of security cameras, has secured contracts as far south as Birmingham, and Scotland to the north. Mr Naylor also recalls Lord Stevens attending the opening ceremony in 1996.

Lord Stevens added: "It's fantastic to return 20 years later as the owner of Valleywatch. Bill and the team have done a great job in delivering security and peace of mind for businesses over the last two decades and our aim is to maintain and improve upon that excellent service."

The Protector Group was founded by ex-Royal Marine John Harvey, and later secured backing from former Newcastle United Chief Executive the late Freddie Fletcher. Mr Fletcher's son Alan, co-founder of enterprising Newcastle law firm Square One Law, sits on the board as does Lord Stevens who took a controlling stake in 2013. Former Newcastle United finance director Ken Slater, was promoted internally to Chief Executive Officer last year.

Mr Slater said: "Our strategy is to continue to grow the business in a structured way, with the industrial estate protection market providing huge opportunities for The Protector Group. We will also be looking out for further acquisitions if suitable opportunities arise."

In order to support its growth Protector signed new banking facilities with Barclays last year. With the purchase of QW Security Protector also picked up QW Mutliclean allowing it to provide a comprehensive, facilities management package. Mr Slater added: "We are further diversifying into combined security and construction cleaning services which is an ideal solution for Construction companies and housebuilders across the UK."