



Where next in the professionalisation of security?

In 2014, the Security Institute's then President (now our Patron), Lord Carlile, CBE, QC, stated that "the security sector is not properly recognised or respected by government, management or the public". Arguably, this is due to the fact that many of the people in our community are not professional.

The Oxford Review published an editorial in September 2017 that discussed what it means to be professional and how these factors change perceptions in the eyes of the members of public whom we aim to protect. They used the medical profession as the best example. A doctor practising in the UK, whether a GP or specialist, must continue to develop professionally or risk being struck off the register of medical practitioners, that is, the General Medical Council (GMC).

Essentially, if you are not willing to be governed by a code of ethics and you are not willing to commit to a routine of continuing professional development (CPD), you should not be calling yourself a professional. Thankfully, in 2017 there are more security practitioners in senior roles who justifiably claim the 'professional' title than those who sit back on past merits without undertaking the CPD that is so necessary in such a fast-evolving field. Regrettably, the British public and often the police don't always see the distinction. The security profession encompasses a vast array of roles from the chief security officer to the frontline operative,

and the generalist to the specialist, along with multiple ancillary fields such as training, recruitment or regulation. Each of these plays a key contribution to the common mission of protecting organisations, communities and individuals. Each type of security practitioner benefits from the professional bodies that serve them, both in terms of the recognition provided by those bodies and the services they provide.

Today, a well-respected security profession could not be more needed, given the present threat environment. In 2018, the risk of marauding terror attacks is high. Cyber breaches are as certain as death and taxes, according to ex-head of the Security Service, Sir Jonathan Evans. Organised crime encompasses a range of security threats from cybercrime to people trafficking to jewellery heists, and every industry sector, government department or third-sector organisation faces its own distinct threats. The Security Institute seeks to be a collaborative organisation where lessons can be shared and professional development encouraged so that the public perception of security is elevated.

The Institute is the UK's largest member association and fulfils most of the functions of a professional body, while constantly striving to enhance its services and standing to the degree that more established professions, such as medicine, enjoy. Our biggest strength is our members, numbering close to 2500 men and women working day to day in roles that cover every area of security, across 40 countries. We promote and develop security careers from the level of the frontline officer, who typically joins us as a student member, through the stages of their experiential and educational journey, and recognise those who have reached the strategic or senior operational level of their field through the Chartered Security Professional qualification, as we manage the Register of Chartered Security Professionals on behalf of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals (WCoSP) livery company.

In 2018 we will continue to place a high emphasis on providing professional development opportunities to security practitioners at all levels. We are also engaging with universities and schools to promote careers in security, by highlighting the increasing diversity of roles that may encourage millennials and generation Z into our sector.

In November 2014 we responded to Lord Carlile's concerns in our Manifesto For Professional Security, presenting a vision to make professional security more effective and respected, and outlining the role that the Security Institute would play. We called on security organisations large and small across the sector to come together and work collaboratively for the benefit of the security profession, security sector and wider society,

and this saw the establishment of a joint platform in the form of the Security Commonwealth, chaired initially by the Institute, then by the ASIS UK Chapter, and now by the Association of Security Consultants.

We called for collaboration with education bodies to examine the future development of structured learning programmes to upskill the security workforce, and with commercial organisations to support such initiatives. I am now leading an initiative looking at career development pathways, and specifically to promote a career in the security industry that starts with frontline security staff, with the support of senior stakeholders in commercial security, corporate security, training and education. If you would like to be involved in this, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Finally, we called upon government and its many agencies to establish an enabling, meaningful and ongoing dialogue with the profession, in order to ensure that it develops in a way that is consistent with the needs of government and society. The continuing development of the CSSC (Cross-Sector Safety and Security Communications) and the establishment of the Security and Resilience Industry Suppliers Community (RISC), the Joint Security and Resilience Centre (JSaRC) and the Policing and Security (PaS) Group have all contributed to a much greater level of ongoing dialogue, and the Step Change Summit in July marked the beginning of a new conversation with the aim of improving the national response to the terrorism threat. The Institute is an active supporter and participant in these major initiatives and others.

In summary, any security professional will agree that one of their greatest tools is influence. The ability to convince others that their actions make them or their organisation vulnerable to crime is paramount in promoting a culture where security is accepted as everyone's responsibility. In order to be taken seriously, the security officer, manager, director or consultant must be able to claim professional competence, soundly reinforced by their peers and a professional body. The Institute offers individuals the opportunity to develop and have their experience and qualifications recognised, while collaborating with the wider security community to address wider societal needs.

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