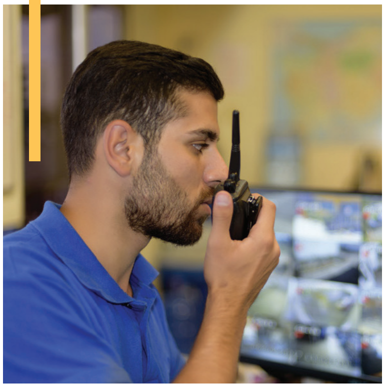
RESEARCH INSIGHTS in Recruitment: Private Security Sector



RESEARCH INSIGHTS IN RECRUITMENT: PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR

1 INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Today approximately half a million people are employed in security roles in the private security sector, and the security industry contributes approximately £6 billion to the economy of the UK. The sector works closely with the police service and provides many of the non-core functions that were previously undertaken by police officers. While most security staff are supplied under contract from specialist suppliers, there are also a considerable number who are directly employed and a smaller number who are self-employed.

The UK private security workforce includes around 360,000 security officers. During the coronavirus outbreak, private security industry figures were calling on the UK Government to state that security officers are 'critical sector' workers. Club and bar security staff are the most affected employees as they have seen their work dry up during the Covid-19 shutdown.

According to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) – the body regulatory for licensing the sector – there are more than 272,000 on-trade door supervisors across the UK, the majority of whom are self-employed or on zero-hours contracts. They have seen their workload grind to a halt since pubs and bars closed on the 20th of March.

The private security sector is characterised by subcontracting. Today, an increasing number of companies tend to subcontract security activities. This service relationship definitively analyses risk prevention problems. During the pandemic, risks have multiplied.

Competition in the sector is tough. Contracts for private security services are often awarded to the cheapest offer ('the lowest bid') rather than to the best offer ('the best bid'). The unfair competition, which is becoming apparent during the awarding of contracts, damages the image of the sector and harms the health and safety of workers.

Of the industry's licence holders, just under 10% are women (around 24,034). Most door staff are aged 26-45 with more than 3,000 over 65.

Estimated annual turnover of largest manned security companies in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2019

Rank	Company Name	2019 Turnover	Est Market Share
1	Mitie Total Security Management	£594,000,000	13.38%
2	G4S Plc**	£430,836,000	9.70%
3	Securitas Security Services Ltd**	£260,800,000	5.87%
4	OCS Group UK Ltd	£165,000,000	3.72%
5	Interserve PLC	£140,000,000	3.15%
6	Bidvest Noonan	£137,000,000	3.09%
7	Loomis UK Ltd**	£121,049,000	2.73%
8	Cordant	£112,000,000	2.52%
9	Wilson James	£107,453,588	2.42%
10	TSS (Total Security Services)	£104,000,000	2.34%
11	ISS Facility Services Limited	£100,000,000	2.25%
11	Axis Security Ltd	£100,000,000	2.25%
13	ICTS UK & Ireland	£98,000,000	2.21%
14	Kingdom Security Ltd	£85,000,000	1.91%
15	Corps Security**	£74,681,000	1.68%
16	Sodexo	£63,000,000	1.42%
17	CIS Security Ltd	£60,000,000	1.35%
18	Profile Security Services Ltd	£52,000,000	1.17%
19	Atalian-Servest Ltd	£49,000,000	1.10%
20	Carlisle Security Services	£48,000,000	1.08%
21	SecuriGroup	£46,000,000	1.04%
22	Amberstone Security Limited	£45,000,000	1.01%
23	Man Commercial Protection Limited	£42,000,000	0.95%
24	Ward Security	£40,000,000	0.90%
25	Amulet	£33,500,000	0.75%
26	STM Group Ltd	£31,000,000	0.70%
27	Guarding UK**	£29,074,074	0.65%
28	Lodge Service Ltd	£28,000,000	0.63%
29	Allied Universal (Europe)	£20,700,000	0.47%
30	UniTrust Protection Services (UK) Ltd	£16,500,000	0.37%
	Estimated Turnover of Top 30	£3,233,593,662	72.81%
	Est. Turnover of UK Regulated Security Industry	£4,440,000,000	100.00%

** The majority of the revenue figures are reported by the companies themselves. Those with two asterisks are revenue figures from their 2018 accounts. Some of these companies have non-related areas of business in their statutory accounts.
Table Source: https://www.infologue.com/exclusive/infologue-2019-top-30-uk-security-companies/

(Statista, “Estimated annual turnover of largest manned security companies in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2019”)
(Professional Security, “Further call to make security officers ‘critical sector’ workers”)
(Morning Advertiser, “What support is there for door staff during the Covid-19”)
(The Guardian, “Private security industry risk grows as police numbers fall”)
(Infologue.com, “Top 30 UK Companies in the Regulated Security Sector”)

2 RECRUITMENT

The security industry is perceived as being relatively unglamorous. Pay for officers has historically been low, and the shift patterns can be long. Career progression is seen as sporadic, and with margins being tight, it's often the case that enhanced benefits fall by the wayside. The industry will continue to lose valuable talent if it cannot incentivise its people, motivate its teams and demonstrate that there are real progression opportunities.

Managing a corporate Glassdoor profile is absolutely crucial. Over half of job seekers abandon their job applications after seeing negative reviews of security companies online. Security businesses should consider what information is out there online, and how it can be better controlled.

Using exit interviews as a vehicle for identifying why staff are leaving, and the ways in which the business could become a more attractive employer is another useful tool. Investment in better social media strategies is also important. Social media can also be used as a valuable recruitment tool, as it enables security companies to engage with different demographics.

One of the top four recruitment priorities is establishing a strong employer brand, according to a 2018 White Paper by CV-Library. Businesses are still struggling to understand employee branding. The employer brand describes an employer's reputation as a place to work and their employee value proposition.

In order for businesses to attract skilled employees, they must invest in appropriate training and enhance their employee benefits offerings.

(Risk UK, "Recruitment strategies in the security industry")

3 SALARIES

In the UK an average door supervisor earns between £10 to £15 per hour.

Security jobs pay in different locations

Location	Average	Range
West London	£82,500	£62,500-£97,500
Bromley & London	£77,500	£62,500-£77,500
Uxbridge	£75,000	£60,000-£82,500
City of London	£72,500	£57,500-£82,500
Bracknell	£72,500	£57,500-£83,750
Bolton & Greater Manchester	£72,500	£36,678-£75,812
Knutsford	£72,500	£63,750-£104,665
Gloucester	£67,500	£52,500-£72,500
Watford & Hertfordshire	£67,500	£62,500-£67,500
Cambridge & Cambridgeshire	£62,500	£41,570-£72,500
Central London	£62,500	£42,500-£82,500
Edinburgh	£62,500	£47,500-£72,500
South West London	£62,500	£52,500-£77,500
Reading	£62,500	£47,500-£67,500
East London	£62,500	£52,500-£72,500
Oxford & Oxfordshire	£62,500	£52,500-£67,500
Luton & Bedfordshire	£62,500	£52,500-£72,500
Borehamwood	£62,500	£57,500-£62,500
Hatfield & Hertfordshire	£62,500	£47,500-£62,500
Gatwick & West Sussex	£62,500	£52,500-£67,500
Portsmouth &Hampshire	£60,000	£47,500-£85,261
Leeds & West Yorkshire	£57,500	£42,500-£66,296
Birmingham	£57,500	£47,500-£72,500
Coventry	£57,500	£47,500-£63,750
Newport & Gwent	£57,500	£52,500-£71,623
Cheltenham	£57,500	£47,500-£62,500
Southampton	£57,500	£52,500-£67,500
South East London	£57,500	£42,500-£71,250
Milton Keynes	£57,500	£47,500-£62,50 0

(Bdaily, "Get Licensed calls on private security industry to increase pay rates")
(CWJobs, "Average security salary")

4 INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

The Private Security sector as a whole works longer than the average UK working week of 42 hours. Competition in the industry is fierce, and unfortunately, security officer roles continue to be seen as stop-gap jobs rather than a career. Without the technology to differentiate their services, pay higher wages, and protect their officers, small companies will continue to struggle to find quality officers.

One of the more significant challenges security businesses face is the ability to recruit trained, qualified and experienced candidates. That challenge is heightened as Brexit realises a significant demographic shift in the availability of staff.

Employees with an SIA licence who are trained, motivated and experienced can afford to be selective. Potentially, this could lead to an increase in staff turnover. Heightened awareness among candidates about employers' brands makes recruitment within the security industry very candidate-driven. Candidates now have far more power, including access to a vast amount of information about a business and the ability to use social media to locate new roles.

Employers are seeking assistance from recruiters and boosting salaries in an effort to compete for scarce skills. Monitoring of key data, such as tracking where applicants are coming from, the average length of time recruitment takes from end-to-end, and the overall spend is crucial. According to SIA, 1 in 3 security staff has symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Companies are trying to find solutions to support employee welfare. The focus is on mental health and wellbeing. Many candidates are more concerned about being happy and supported in their workplace than they are about receiving a pay rise. On that basis, the power of non-monetary benefits should not be underestimated.

(Risk UK, "Recruitment strategies in the security industry")
(Security Industry Union Ltd –main website page)

5 SOURCES

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- **Security Industry Union Ltd**
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