

# Strategic Plan 2023-2025

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# Foreword

The Board of the Private Security Authority are delighted to present our Strategic Plan for the period 2023 to 2025. The Plan sets out our objectives for the next three years and focuses on the expansion of licensing, raising the levels of standards and qualifications, and improved communications with our licence holders and the public. Our priority is to protect consumers and the public by strengthening the regulatory environment.

The regulation of the private security industry is an important endeavour. Licensing has changed the face of the Irish security industry, raising levels of professionalism, tackling criminality and the black economy, and instilling public confidence in the provision of services by private security providers. Regulation, like the security industry, is ever evolving. We will continue to work with our industry stakeholders to ensure that regulation together with the standards and qualifications we prescribe remain relevant in this changing environment.

This is an ambitious Plan which will require the support of the Minister for Justice and our industry stakeholders if we are to see its successful implementation. We look forward to working with the Minister, her Department and all those with an interest in the regulation of the security industry over the course of the Plan.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who contributed in the preparation of this strategy. Their contributions helped the Board to set the foundation on which to build this Plan. We would also like to thank the staff of the Authority for their support during the development of the Plan. We look forward to working with all our stakeholders and staff over the three years of the Plan.

01—  
The Authority



The Private Security Authority (PSA) is responsible for the regulation of the private security industry in Ireland.

Our role is to protect consumers and the public by promoting a quality regulatory environment for businesses and individuals working in the security industry. We are an agency of the Department of Justice established by the Private Security Services Act 2004. The Act was amended in 2011 and 2021.

There are currently just under 42,000 employee and contractor licences in circulation in the following sectors.

- Access Control Installation and Maintenance
- Cash-in-Transit
- CCTV Installation and Maintenance
- CCTV Monitoring
- Door Supervisor
- Event Security
- Intruder Alarm Installation and Maintenance
- Intruder Alarm Monitoring
- Locksmith
- Private Investigator
- Security Guard

During the course of this Strategic Plan regulation will be extended to employees in the Electronic Security<sup>1</sup>, Enforcement Guard, Event Security and Private Investigator sectors and to contractors in the Enforcement Guard, Security Consultant and Suppliers and Installers of Safes sectors.

We are administered by a Board appointed by the Minister for Justice. The current Board took office in March 2022 and is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the Authority. This Strategic Plan sets out the new Board's goals and objectives for the next three years.

<sup>1</sup> The Electronic Security sectors includes Access Control, Intruder Alarm, CCTV and Powered Gates installation and maintenance.

02—  
The Regulatory  
Environment



The publication of this Strategic Plan takes place following the unprecedented events of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like society and the broader economy, the security industry has been impacted in ways that could not have been foreseen at the end of 2019. Our research shows that over 70% of security contractors saw their turnover drop during 2020 and 2021<sup>2</sup>. There has been a recovery in turnover in 2022 and we have seen an increased demand for security services as economic activity grows.

This recovery and growth has led to labour pressures across all sectors of the security industry and it has become a topic in all meetings with industry stakeholders since the start of the year. During the course of this strategy, we have committed to looking at ways of increasing female participation in the security industry as well as looking to see if regulation hampers access to the security industry by certain groups. We will also work with our industry stakeholders to see if we can use regulation to support career paths so as to encourage people to look at the industry as a long term career.

## Licensing Statistics August 2022

Sector	Individuals	Contractors	Turnover (€)
Cash In Transit	1,033	4	52,900,000
Door Supervisor (Event Security)	N/A	35	1,104,000
Door Supervisor (Licensed Premises)	10,684	50	10,167,000
Electronic Security Sector <sup>3</sup>	N/A	1,076	292,744,000
Locksmith	N/A	222	20,658,000
Private Investigator	N/A	101	8,184,000
Security Guard (Alarm Monitoring) <sup>4</sup>	742	37	61,869,000
Security Guard (CCTV Monitoring)	N/A	32	23,182,000
Security Guard (Event Security)	N/A	47	3,053,000
Security Guard (Static)	26,576	184	445,989,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,035</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>919,850,000<sup>5</sup></b>

<sup>2</sup> PSA Research Report 2021 – The impact of Covid-19 on the security industry in Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> The Electronic Security Sector currently includes licensing in the sub-sectors of Access Control, Intruder Alarm and CCTV bringing the number of sectors licensed to 12.

<sup>4</sup> The figure for individuals includes Alarm Monitoring and CCTV Monitoring as one licence covers both categories.

<sup>5</sup> Turnover is based on figures provided by contractors with their application and relates to their previous accounting period.

We currently regulate across 12 sectors of the security industry and during the course of this plan, this will be extended to 16. We anticipate that the number of licences will increase from around 42,000 to in excess of 50,000. The industry is not an homogenous one, with contractors ranging from low-turnover sole traders operating in their local community to large national and international companies with multi-million Euros turnover. This diversity presents many challenges for a regulator as each sector is different in how it operates and within each sector the scale of individual businesses can require different approaches in the areas of licensing, compliance and communications.

Most of the growth in licensing will be due to the extension of employee licensing in sectors including electronic security, enforcement guards and event security. In order to provide for this increase, this strategy includes a broad programme of development in training, qualifications and standards. Consultation with the security industry will be critical in ensuring that these developments meet the needs of security providers.

Our primary focus is the protection of the public and consumers of security services. To achieve this we will strengthen the regulatory environment by undertaking a review of our standards to support crime prevention and consumer protection. We will also increase our public information offering using social media and targeting information at consumers across all sectors of the industry.

We will continue to strive to work as effectively and as efficiently as possible by providing our staff with the resources they require. Investment in new digital processing systems are a priority in order to deal with the growing licensing numbers, simplify customer interactions and deliver a modern regulatory service.

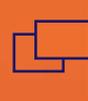
# Our Mission and Values



**Our Mission** is to protect the public by regulating the private security industry through raising standards, increasing awareness and enforcing compliance.



**Our Vision** is one of enhanced public confidence and consumer protections in a well regulated security industry.



## Our Values

### Partnership

Work with our industry partners to support regulation.

### Excellence

Excel in the provision of regulation and business delivery.

### Openness

Be fair, transparent and respectful.

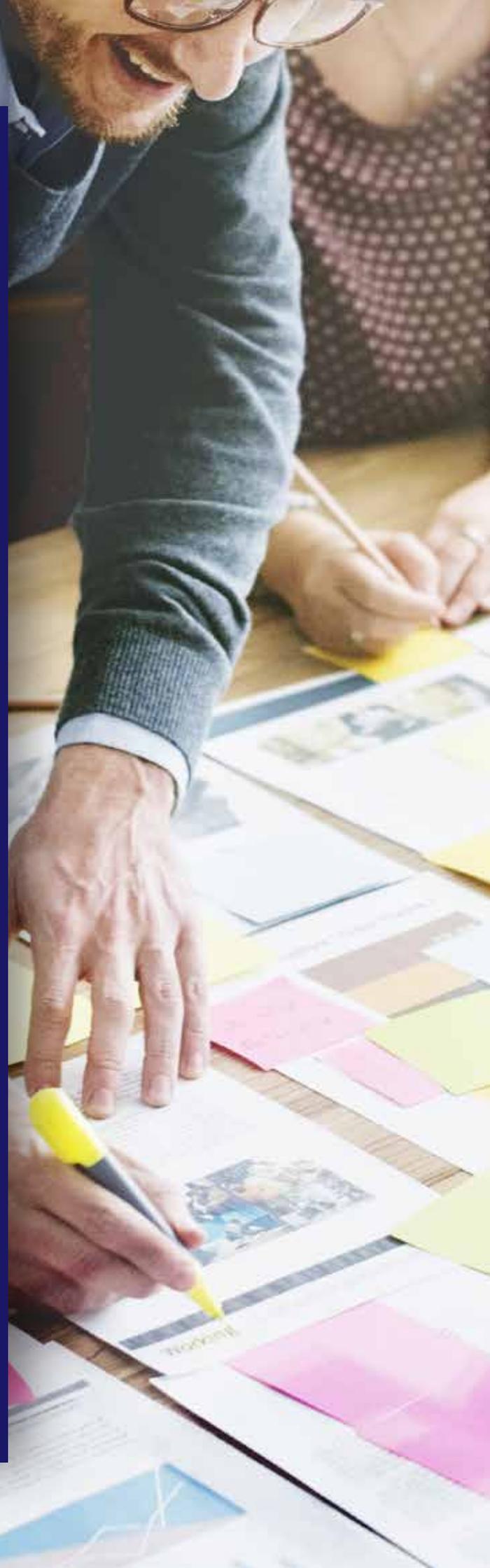
### Performance

Operate an effective and efficient service with good governance.

### Commitment

Deliver an environment in which our staff can excel, our industry can prosper and the public is safe.

# 03— Goals and Objectives



## Goal 01

# Regulating the Private Security Industry

WE WILL COMPLETE THE LICENSING OF SECTORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES ACTS

## Objective

To achieve our strategic goal we will

- Licence individuals working in Event Security
- Licence individuals working as Private Investigators
- Licence contractors and individuals working as Enforcement Guards
- Licence contractors operating as Security Consultants
- Licence contractors operating as Suppliers and Installers of Safes
- Licence individuals working as Locksmiths
- Licence individuals working in the Electronic Security Sectors
- Licence contractors and individuals working in the Powered Gates sector
- Extend the scope of Security Guard licensing to include Dog Handlers.

## Action

During the lifetime of this plan we will

- Set a critical date for the licensing of Event Security Personnel
- Set a critical date for the licensing of Private Investigator
- Set a critical date for the licensing of Enforcement Guards
- Set a critical date for the licensing of Security Consultants
- Set a critical date for the licensing of Suppliers and Installers of Safes
- Set a critical date for the licensing of individuals working as Locksmiths
- Set the critical date for the licensing of individuals working in the Electronic Security Sectors
- Set the critical date for a Powered Gates licence
- Set the critical date for the licensing of Dog Handlers

## Outcome

Success/Progress will be achieved by

- Completing the licensing of Event Security Personnel
- Completing the licensing of Private Investigators
- Completing the licensing of Enforcement Guards
- Completing the licensing of Security Consultants
- Completing the licensing of Suppliers and Installers of Safes
- Completing the licensing of Locksmiths
- Completing the licensing of the Electronic Security Sectors
- Issue new sector licence for Powered Gates
- Completing the licensing of Dog Handlers

## Resources

The processing of licences is paper heavy and is dependent on old technology that requires frequent staff inputs throughout the application process. If our objective of delivering a new digital IT system (Goal 5) is realised, the increased volume of decisions from Q3 2023 onwards will nonetheless require a small number of additional staff. If the Goal 5 objective cannot be realised, the requirement for additional staff will be higher.

## Goal 02

# Ensuring compliance by tackling unlicensed activity

WE WILL ACT AGAINST THOSE WHO PROVIDE UNLICENSED SERVICES, THEIR CLIENTS AND THOSE LICENCE HOLDERS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH LICENSING REGULATIONS

## Objective

To achieve our strategic goal we will

- Tackle unlicensed activity in our industry
- Support compliant licence holders by tackling abuses of the licensing regulations
- Monitor the activities of licensed security providers
- Develop our compliance and inspection capabilities

## Action

During the lifetime of this plan we will

- Focus resources on dealing with unlicensed activity
- Act against licence holders who don't meet our licensing requirements
- Undertake inspections of licensed contractors and security officers
- Expand our range of internal and outsourced inspection services

## Outcome

Success/Progress will be achieved by

- Prosecuting those providing unlicensed security services and their clients
- Revoking the licences of those who fail to comply with licensing regulations
- Conducting 900 licensed inspections during the course of this plan
- Broadening the scope of our enforcement activity

## Resources

Our compliance resources have not kept pace with the growth of licensing and this will need to be addressed as licensing expands further. Over the course of the Plan we aim to increase the number of Regional Inspectors from 6 to 10 and expand the use of external providers to complement our compliance activity.

Increasing the inspectorate will require an increase in administrative support staff.

## Goal 03

# Enhance the provision of security services through the use of standards and qualifications

WE WILL WORK WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO RAISE THE LEVELS OF PROFESSIONALISM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

## Objective

To achieve our strategic goal we will

- Develop standards and training for the licensing of Enforcement Guards
- Develop a standard for the licensing of Security Consultants
- Develop a standard for the licensing of Supplier and Installer of Safes Contractors
- Develop the training requirements for Locksmiths
- Identify suitable training requirements for the Electronic Security Sectors
- Develop a standard to support the licensing of Powered Gates contractors
- Develop a standard for the licensing of Dog Handlers
- Monitor the provision of auditing services provided for licensing purposes
- Monitor the provision of training services provided for licensing purposes
- Commence a review of standards that are over 10 years old

## Action

During the lifetime of this plan we will

- Continue to facilitate the activities of the working group on Enforcement Guard Licensing
- Complete consultations on the development of licensing requirements
- Establish a working group to identify the licensing requirements for contractors and individuals in the sector
- Consult with Locksmiths on the training requirements for the sector
- Establish a working group to evaluate the suitability of the Electronic Security Apprenticeship for licensing
- Introducing technical standards for contractors in the Powered Gates sector
- Identify the requirements for the licensing of Dog Handlers
- Strengthen the regime of monitoring auditing services
- Strengthen the regime of monitoring training providers
- Ensure that standards remain relevant

## Outcome

Success/Progress will be achieved by

- Publish a standard and training requirements for the licensing of Enforcement Guards
- Publish a standard for the licensing of Security Consultants
- Publish a standard for the licensing of Suppliers and Installers of Safes
- Publish the training requirements for Locksmiths
- Publish the training requirements for the Electronic Security Sectors
- Publish a technical standards for contractors in the Powered Gates sector
- Publish a standard for the licensing of Dog Handlers
- The provision of a strong oversight system for PSA standards
- The provision of a strong oversight system for PSA training
- Publish new standards where they are deemed necessary

## Resources

The development of training and standards is complex and time/resource intensive. In order to complete our programme of publishing new and reviewing existing standards we will have to outsource some of this work. An additional Executive Officer is required to manage the planned work schedule. The procurement of outsourced services will require additional internal supports.

With the increasing use of technology across all areas of the security industry the Authority will need to recruit a technical expert to assist us in the areas of standards and training.

## Goal 04

# Look at ways our industry can benefit society

USE REGULATION TO BENEFIT CONSUMERS, THE PUBLIC AND THOSE PROVIDING SECURITY SERVICES

## Objective

To achieve our strategic goal we will

- Strengthen our relationship with our licence holders
- Work with our industry to look at ways of supporting female participation in the security sector
- Consider the qualifications and supports needed to support career paths for those seeking a career in the security industry
- Promote respect, diversity and inclusion in the security industry
- Develop our social media channels
- Protect the interests of the consumer and the public
- Evaluate the public perception of our industry and regulation

## Action

During the lifetime of this plan we will

- Establish Consultative Forums for licence holders
- Establish a cross industry forum to identify ways of supporting increased female participation
- Work with industry stakeholders to look at the opportunities for career progression
- Undertake research to identify the barriers to working in the security industry
- Enhance our online presence to include twitter and other social media platforms
- Target information at consumers and the public
- Undertake regular independent surveys of the public, consumers and the security industry

## Outcome

Success/Progress will be achieved by

- Improved engagement with our licence holders
- Publish the forum's recommendations on female participation in the security industry
- Develop a regulatory environment to support career progression
- Publish a research report on the impact of diversity and inclusion in the security industry
- Engaging with our industry and public on social media
- Increased consumer/public awareness of our industry
- Report on the findings of the public survey

## Resources

To deliver the commitments set out above we will need to appoint a communications officer to lead engagement with our stakeholders and to manage our social media and public relations.

## Goal 05

# Deliver the supports necessary to develop our staff and enhance our organisation

WORK WITH OUR STAFF TO BE A MODEL REGULATOR

## Objective

To achieve our strategic goal we will

- Provide our staff with the skills and resources necessary to be effective
- Strive to ensure that our organisation meets the expectations of our stakeholders and staff
- Deliver a new digital system to provide our services in an efficient manner

## Action

During the lifetime of this plan we will

- Invest in training for our staff and in resources to support their roles
- Engage with our stakeholders and staff to understand their expectations of us
- Migrate our databases on to a new digital platform

## Outcome

Success/Progress will be achieved by

- Having a competent staff who have the resources necessary for the efficient undertaking of their role
- Our staff being proud to be part of our organisation and our stakeholders recognising us as a progressive regulator
- Enhancing the delivery of services to our industry

## Resources

Our 2021 business review highlighted the negative impact of our current IT system on service delivery. The delivery of a new digital IT system is the most important objective of this strategy. Without it, we will struggle to advance our licensing mandate. The strategy aims to deliver a new fit for purpose system during 2023.

# 04— Implementation and Reporting



We will work in partnership with the Minister and her Department, our industry stakeholders and other interested parties to ensure the successful implementation of this strategy.

Key to the success of the strategy will be the availability of resources to deliver on the commitments therein. Resources are also vital to our aim of offering a professional, modern service to our licence holders and the public. Investment in digital technologies to replace our outmoded IT systems is a must if regulation is to expand to meet all of our statutory obligations. In the absence of a new IT infrastructure we anticipate that we will need to grow our staff by 10 over the course of the plan. We will be seeking the support of the Department of Justice to deliver these new technologies during the early stages of this plan.

The cooperation of the security industry in achieving the objectives in the strategy is paramount to us and we are committed to working with the industry in a collaborative approach for our mutual benefit. We plan to expand engagement with our licence holders through the establishment of a number of forums across the different sectors we regulate.

The Authority's senior management team will be responsible for translating the strategy into annual business plans with performance targets. The annual plans will be published and industry stakeholders will have an opportunity to advise on the external impact of measures taken to implement the strategy.

We will report on our performance in implementing this strategy in an open, transparent and public manner. Reporting will be undertaken through a number of channels:

- The Chief Executive and senior management team will report to the Board at each Board meeting.
- The Minister for Justice and her Department will be kept informed of progress through the annual Performance Delivery Agreement, at governance meetings and in our Annual Reports.
- The security industry and the public will receive regular reports through our social media, e-zine, consultative forums and in our Annual Reports.

Constant review and monitoring of the strategy will be of critical importance and where necessary we will take corrective action to ensure delivery of our objectives. It is also important that the strategy remains relevant and some of objectives may change in light of circumstance not currently foreseen.

## Appendix 01

# Sectors Licensed as at September 2022

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Employee</b>
Cash in Transit	Yes	Yes
Door Supervisor (Licensed Premises)	Yes	Yes
Event Security	Yes	No
Electronic Security Sectors (Installers of Access Control)	Yes	No
Electronic Security Sectors (Installers of CCTV)	Yes	No
Electronic Security Sectors (Installers of Intruder Alarm)	Yes	No
Enforcement Guard	No	No
Locksmith	Yes	No
Private Investigator	Yes	No
Security Consultants	No	No
Security Guard (Alarm and CCTV Monitoring)	Yes	Yes
Security Guard (Static Guarding)	Yes	Yes
Suppliers and Installers of Safes	No	No

## Appendix 02

# Statutory Provisions

Section 9 of the Private Security Services Act 2004 provides for the provision of a Strategic Plan.

**Section 9. (1) The Authority shall, as soon as practicable after it is established and thereafter within 6 months before each third anniversary of its establishment, prepare and submit to the Minister, for approval by the Minister with or without amendment, a strategic plan for the ensuing 3-year period.**

**(2) A strategic plan shall—**

- (a) set out the key objectives, outputs and related strategies of the Authority, including its use of resources,
- (b) comply with any directions issued from time to time by the Minister in relation to the form and manner of the plan's preparation, and
- (c) have regard to the need to ensure the most beneficial and efficient use of the Authority's resources.

**(3) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after a strategic plan has been so approved, cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.**

Section 8 of the Private Security Services Act 2004 provides for the functions of the Authority.

**Section 8.—(1) The Authority shall, subject to this Act, control and supervise persons providing security services and maintain and improve standards in the provision by them of those services.**

**(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), the Authority may, and where required by this Act shall—**

- (a) grant and renew licences,
- (b) issue identity cards to licensees,
- (c) where appropriate, suspend or revoke licences,
- (d) establish and maintain a register of licensees,
- (e) specify standards to be observed in the provision of security services by licensees or particular categories of licensees,
- (f) specify qualifications or any other requirements (including requirements as to training) for the grant of licences,
- (g) undertake or commission, or collaborate or assist in, research projects and activities relating to the provision of security services, including the compilation of statistical information and other records necessary for the proper planning, development and provision of those services,
- (h) investigate any security services being provided by any person,
- (i) establish and administer a system of investigation and adjudication of complaints against licensees,
- (j) monitor the provision of private security services generally,
- (k) liaise with licensees with a view to keeping itself informed of any matters requiring its attention,
- (l) advise the Minister on any matter relating to its functions,
- (m) keep the Minister informed of developments in relation to the provision of security services by licensees or particular categories of licensees and assist him or her in coordinating and developing policy in that regard.

**(3) The Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, by order—**

- (a) confer on the Authority such additional functions relating to security services and connected with the functions conferred on it by subsections (1) and (2) or any order under this subsection as the Minister considers appropriate, and
- (b) make such provision as the Minister considers necessary or expedient in relation to matters ancillary to or arising out of any of the functions mentioned in paragraph (a).

**(4) The Minister may by order amend or revoke an order under this section, including an order under this subsection.**

**(5) Any function of the Authority may, without prejudice to its general responsibilities under this Act, be performed through or by its Chief Executive or any other member of its staff duly authorised in that behalf.**

**(6) The Authority may, subject to this Act, do anything which it considers necessary or expedient for enabling it to perform its functions.**

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