The Competence of Frontline Security Professionals and What They Say About Their Work

A survey in nine countries

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Foreword

In recent years, the Board of Directors of the International Foundation for Protection Officers (IFPO), recognized the need to clearly define the ever-changing role of the protection officer. With this goal in mind, the Board commissioned a ground-breaking research study to identify and outline the roles and responsibilities of security officers in the 21st century.

This research was made possible by the generosity of the sponsors. We would like to recognize:

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Sincerely,

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Executive Director
International Foundation for Protection Officers
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Executive Summary

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The research was undertaken to better understand the perspectives and experiences of frontline security personnel with the aim of highlighting key considerations for enhancing their capabilities. It explored the range of tasks that they undertake, the perceived difficulty of those tasks and of the competence of their colleagues, and the effectiveness of training. It also looked at other key issues impacting on frontline security personnel, namely licensing, the use of force (including carrying weapons), and involvement with non-security tasks.

The findings are based on 10,625 responses to a survey of security officers/guards, from nine countries: Canada, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Nigeria, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and the USA; supplemented by online one-to-one interviews with 42 security professionals.

Insights from the survey

General perceptions

General perceptions of working in security were fairly positive, although with around a third of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the aspects explored, there may be a level of apathy towards the role.

Nonetheless:

- 59% indicated it provides an opportunity to serve the public;
- 55% indicated the work is interesting;
- 53% saw it as a career.

However only 38% felt that it pays well.

Frequency of tasks

The survey explored six 'typical' tasks of the work of security officers/guards and found that carrying out access control is the most common (54% did this often); followed by undertaking physical patrols (48% did this often), customer service (44% did this often), monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies (39% did this often), enforcing rules (39% did this often) and finally basic investigations (32% did this often).

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The frequency with which tasks were undertaken was impacted by a number of characteristics such as:

- sector (there appears to be a link between the nature of the work and priorities in different sectors and the frequency of different security tasks);
- how the respondent was employed (contracted respondents undertook all six tasks more often than in-house and self-employed);
- gender (male respondents undertook all six tasks more often than females);
- general education level (those who had not completed their general education conducted all six tasks less often than those who had);
- age (some tasks were more often carried out by older respondents).

Difficulty of tasks

The relative ease/difficulty of each of those six tasks was also explored. Respondents rarely perceived them to be 'difficult'. The majority perceived each task as either 'easy' or 'average'. Customer service was the task most commonly perceived to be 'easy' (50%); followed by physical patrols/surveillance (49%), access control (45%), monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies (43%), basic investigations (42%) and enforcing rules (37%). There were no clear trends between the characteristics of respondents and their perception of how easy/difficult tasks are.

Competence

Respondents were asked how competent their colleagues were in a number of activities that feature in security work. Overall, a fairly low proportion of respondents perceived their colleagues to be 'low' in competence which is positive – between 6% and 13% of respondents rated their colleagues as 'low' in competence in each activity.

Respondents more commonly rated their colleagues as 'high' in competence than 'medium' although at most 53% of respondents rated colleagues as 'high' in competence in any given activity – suggesting that ample room remains for improvement in how well activities are completed.

The activities most commonly perceived to be carried out with 'high' competence were customer service (53%), and emergency response (51%).

Those least commonly perceived to be carried out with 'high' competence were working with civil

and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc. (39%), conducting an investigation (41%) and both report writing (42%) and written communication skills (42%).

Although there were some specific variations across a number of characteristics, the only clear overall trend in respect of perception of competence and the characteristics of respondents, was that across all of the tasks explored, those who receive on-going training within their current role more commonly viewed their colleagues to be high in competence than those that do not receive any on-going training. This would suggest that on-going training is an important factor in performing competently.

Training

The training received was rarely perceived to be ineffective; between 5% and 9% of respondents rated their training as such in each activity. That said, at most 55% of respondents rated the training as 'high (effective)' suggesting once again that there is scope for improvements.

Training was most commonly rated as 'high (effective)' in the same area as those perceived to be carried out with high competence by colleagues; namely - customer service (55%), situational awareness (52%) and emergency response (52%).

Similarly, those where the training was least commonly rated as 'high (effective)' were the same as those least commonly perceived to be carried out with high competence by colleagues - civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc. (41%), conducting an investigation (42%), and report writing (45%).

Perceptions of training were fairly consistent regardless of the respondents' characteristics but with some notable variations. The only clear trend (as with competence) across all of the activities explored was that respondents that (generally) receive on-going training within their role were more likely to view the training they had had for those activities to be high/effective, than those that do not receive on-going training. Again, this suggests that receiving on-going training is an important factor in how effective their training is perceived to be.

85% of respondents indicated that they do receive on-going training, although it should be noted that a very wide definition was used (including both formal and informal types).

Respondents currently needing a license for their security work were much more likely to indicate they receive on-going training than those who do not. Contracted respondents were less likely to

receive on-going training than in-house and self-employed respondents.

Site-specific training

10% of respondents indicated that they had received no site-specific training after being assigned to their current site. Employment type impacted on the likelihood of receiving site- specific training (contracted respondents were less likely to receive it than in-house and self-employed respondents), as did the presence of on-going training (those that do not receive on-going training are much less likely to have received site-specific training than those that do receive on-going training).

Non-security tasks

27% of respondents undertake non-security tasks often and 44% occasionally; non-security tasks are more commonly a feature of the work of:

- respondents who did not complete their education (than those achieving high/secondary school education or higher);
- respondents needing a license than those who do not;
- female respondents (a little more than male respondents).

Licensing

82% of respondents indicated that they need a license to carry out their current work as a security officer/guard.

60% 'agreed' that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police for security personnel to do our jobs.

55% 'agreed' that the process gives security officers/guards a better understanding of their Duties

25% 'agreed' that licensing is a waste of time

Female respondents were a little more skeptical about the value of licensing than males, as were self-employed respondents.

Use of force

31% never use force; 25% use force about once per year; and 23% use force about once a month, although much less in the UK.

Cash-in-transit/armored car guards were the most likely to have used force, followed by door supervisor/bouncers and undercover store detective/loss prevention. In terms of sector, it was most common in the executive protection sector.

Meanwhile those that (generally) receive on-going training were much more likely to use force than those who do not receive on-going training. Contracted respondents were much less likely to use force than in-house and self-employed respondents.

Older respondents and those that had been working in security the longest were less likely to use force than younger respondents.

18% stated that the competence of their colleagues in using force was 'low'.

Female respondents were a little less likely to perceive colleagues as high/competent in the use of force than male respondents. Cash-in transit/armored car guards were the most likely to perceive their colleagues to be competent in the use of force. That they use force more may necessitate a high level of competence. The training received in the use of force was most often (38%) perceived to be adequate ('medium'). A third (33%) perceived it to be effective('high'). One in ten respondents (10%) thought it was not effective ('low'). Again cash-in-transit/armored guards were much more likely to perceive the training in the use of force to be effective than other roles, again reflecting their likelihood of using greater levels of force – necessitating a higher standard of training.

Carrying a weapon

Respondents were asked whether they ever carried a weapon and 35% said did not. Of those that did, the weapon carried most commonly, by a third of respondents (33%), was an electrical energy device. Nearly as many carried a striking weapon (29%), and more than a fifth (22%) carried a chemical irritant. Less than a fifth (17%) carried a firearm.

The vast majority of those that carried a weapon thought they had received adequate training in how and when to use it (90%). Respondents holding a license were much more likely to indicate they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s) than those without a license. Further, respondents that (generally) receive on-going training were much more likely to indicate they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s) than those who do not receive on-going training.

Differences by country

The survey benefited from responses from participants in nine different countries around the globe. The comparatively low level of responses from some countries (South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Ecuador) meant that not all could be considered in additional analysis to identify whether the country the respondent was based in affected their perspectives. Nonetheless, issues that were evident included:

- Respondents from Nigeria appeared to hold a stronger sense of the value of their work, in the respect that they were the most likely to agree they saw it as a career, and also that it offers the opportunity to serve the public. For some security activities (but not all) they (alongside Canada respondents) rated the training they had received as 'high/effective' at a proportion above the average. The practice of undertaking 'non-security' tasks was least common among respondents from Nigeria. They were the most likely to agree that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police, and (along with UK respondents) more likely than average to disagree that licensing is a waste of time.

- UK respondents held comparatively negative attitudes – they were least likely to see security as a career and the least satisfied with the pay. UK and also Ireland respondents were less likely than average to indicate they receive on-going training. UK respondents were also the least likely to indicate they receive site-specific training after being assigned to their current site. The use of force was considerably less common among the UK respondents than the average. Interestingly though, across all the six key tasks explored they more commonly indicated these were 'core' (something they did 'often'). They were more likely to perceive undertaking physical patrols and customer service to be 'easy'.

- USA respondents were a little more likely than those from other countries to perceive four (of the six) tasks - access control, basic investigations, enforcing rules and monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies – to be easy.

- For some of the activities explored in the survey (but not all), respondents from Ireland and India were more doubtful about the competence of their colleagues and about the effectiveness of training received for specific activities. Respondents from India and Ireland were also more doubtful about whether licensing gives security offices/guards a better understanding of their duties.

- As alluded to above, respondents from Canada typically (but not for all activities) rated

(alongside Nigeria respondents) the training they had received as 'high/effective' at a proportion above the average.

Insights from the one-to-one interviews

Factors that made the job difficult

There were a number of factors that the research participants indicated made the job difficult:

- The absence of procedures, or ones lacking in detail, or where the information changed so often that it was difficult to keep up;
- Clients and/or (senior) management undermining them by not following procedures fully or partially;
- The low morale of frontline workers caused by systemic factors, such as low pay and poor working conditions, and low levels of interest on and appreciation of their work;
- The competing demands and/or contradictory expectations regarding their work from different stakeholders;
- Poor employment and management practices, sometimes creating dangerous working conditions other times ignoring or undermining their contribution;
- The lack of support from law enforcement;
- Shortcomings in technology (in terms of what is available and how it is used) which undermined their ability to carry out their role, and/or a lack of training in how to use technologies effectively;
- The legal uncertainty and the training limitations sometimes made it difficult to use force;
- Some respondents referred to sexist attitudes and behavior that remain among some working within security, which create a more adverse working environment.

Factors that make the role easier

The research participants typically indicated that addressing the issues noted above that made the role difficult, were things that make the role easier. A striking factor in rendering tasks easier was effective management, ultimately of all the changes that can improve the lot of the frontline worker the key determinant of their likely success is how good managers are (at all levels).

Perspectives on training

Respondents clearly saw merit in the training provided, that it was relevant and delivered effectively. Where it was not it was because:

- Organizations did not take training seriously in terms of recognizing its significance and

investing in it appropriately;

- What was offered was deemed unspecific and/or not related to their work;
- The trainers had limited skills sets and/or the course designers lacked awareness and understanding of the audience;
- The shortcomings of what was offered necessitated people seeking training outside of work (sometimes at their own expense).

Personal capabilities required for effective frontline work

There was a heavy emphasis placed on the value of the personal capabilities of the individuals and the relative merit of employers encouraging and developing these capabilities within their security personnel. Specifically: communication skills; social skills; showing self-awareness and being empathetic; to take care of themselves; to show initiative and be professionally curious; to be flexible; being prepared to learn as change occurred.

Conclusion

Frontline security workers are key, and often considered to be ‘essential’ workers. The number of them across countries, industries and organizations is testament to their importance. So too the fact that in most domains their work is licensed, albeit according to our sample this often appears to miss the mark in terms of improving performance. Indeed, what we learn is that there is so much more we can do to improve the contribution of security officers/guards and the work they do and crucially the perception of it. Good management, effective training, appropriate awareness of key competencies are all key. It is not that workers are unhappy, mostly they are not, it is more that there is scope for things being better. This will afford benefits for workers, their employers of course, but also, crucially, the general public.

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Section 1. Introduction

Setting the scene

1.1 The work undertaken by security officers, sometimes called guards, is important. Indeed, in the coronavirus pandemic in 2020-21 that afflicted the world many countries designated their security operatives as 'essential' workers[1] where they played a key role in keeping services functioning and ensuring people were safe. They often took on new tasks, from temperature checking to maintaining social distancing, while retaining many of their traditional duties around protecting communities, organisations, buildings and people from crime and other threats.

1.2 Fifty years ago, the much referred to Rand reports[2] stated:

> *Few would disagree with the argument that, ceterus paribus, if private security were drastically reduced or eliminated, reported crime or fear of crime would rise …. The thrust of this study begins with and accepts the premise that private security provides significant social benefits.*

1.3 Yet there is a pervading doubt that – even after five decades - these 'essential' workers provide 'significant social benefits' either by clients or the public or other stakeholders such as law enforcement. Although the RAND report recommended a policy to guide interaction between public and private policing units the latter is still not meaningfully engaged at a strategic level, be that by governments or law enforcement units.[3] This is a massive missed opportunity

1.4 The security sector generally, and security officers/guards specifically suffer from an image problem.[4] Around the world the perception of the poorly presented, badly dressed, under trained, overweight, hapless male security guard pervades.[5] That people's impressions of the private security sector are based on their encounters with only frontline workers results in a lack of understanding of the depth and complexity

[1] See, for example: www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx ; www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/04/15/2016289/0/en/Recognizing-the-Essential-Public-Safety-Role-of-Private-Security-During-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.html.
[2] Kakalik, J.S. and Wildhorn, S. (1971) *Private Police in the United States: Findings and Recommendations*. Prepared for the Department of Justice. Volume 1. Rand: Santa Monca.
[3] Gill, M. and Howell, C. (2017a) *Towards 'A Strategy for Change' for the Security Sector.* Tunbridge Wells: Perpetuity Research. www.perpetuityresearch.com.
[4] Manzo, J. (2009) Security Officers' Perspectives on Training. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. [Online] 51 (3), 381–410.
See also consideration of public perception in the UK (2020) - https://www.bsia.co.uk/blogs/131/
[5] Löfstrand, C., Loftus, B. and Loader, I., (2016) Doing 'dirty work': Stigma and esteem in the private security industry. *European journal of criminology*, *13*(3), pp.297-314.

of the sector and undermines the perceived value of the private security industry.[6]

1.5 Negative perceptions of frontline security work have been fed by a longstanding concern about the competence of operatives. In short, the perception is that despite the important work that security officers engage in, which may even be considered essential, many of those who are involved are neither able nor professional. But is this true? What competencies are needed? Where are the gaps and how can they be filled? More specifically, there is a lack of up-to-date documented sources on the following:

- the range of duties undertaken by security officers
- the range of tasks they are they responsible for (which includes a combination of physical and intellectual activities)
- the types of tasks they find the most difficult
- the types of tasks they find the easiest
- the complexity of these various tasks
- the technical skills required to complete various tasks
- the foundational knowledge required to complete various tasks
- the tasks they undertake from the common to the rare
- the extent and ways in which security tasks undertaken overlap non-security-related tasks.

1.6 It is these questions that the study on which this report is based has sought to address. It has been focused on ascertaining the views of the frontline practitioners themselves. It is not an evaluation, that would require a very different approach, rather it is an enquiry to better understand what it will take to improve the competence, and therefore the perception of frontline security workers, to increase understanding of their role, and to lay the foundation for a better skilled, more competent, and more widely valued essential security service provider. And it takes as its focus the views and experiences of security officers/guards.

1.7 The current knowledge gap impedes progress. It gets in the way of the general ability to improve the training of security officers, of identifying the best routes to upskilling, of being able to influence regulators to improve practices and for that matter standards and guidelines etc. Moreover, it limits the opportunity to document any progress that has been made.

[6] Cunningham, W,. Strauchs, J, and van Meter, C. (1990) *The Hallcrest Report II: Private Security Trends 1970-2000. Washington: Butterworth Heinemann,* noted, 'Many people equate the private security industry with guard services. That is, for those who are unfamiliar with the various components of private security, guard services represent the totality of private security' (p.128).

What do security officers do?

1.8 A wide variety of tasks are undertaken by security officers across the world.[7] Early work by Shearing, Farnell and Stenning[8] in Canada documented the range of roles undertaken by security staff often extending beyond purely security-related ones, in part because their skill sets enabled them to do them and/or because they were situationally placed to undertake them, and clients wanted or demanded it. Later, Wakefield[9] in the UK identified six security-related functions of security officers: housekeeping; customer care; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour, enforcing rules and administering sanctions; responding to emergencies and offenses in progress; and gathering and sharing information, but also noted they engaged in non-security related tasks. These are general categories, they can each be further divided. Just for example, customer care can be interpreted as providing people with crime prevention advice which is clearly security related and also assisting people with directions which is less obviously so (unless of course it is undertaken in the context of an emergency).[10]

1.9 More recently, work for a doctoral thesis by Kitteringham,[11] has helped to classify the duties of security officers. Summarising from a range of different studies he generated this list:

- Control access (physical and electronic)
- Conduct basic investigations
- Conduct inspections
- Enforce rules
- Respond to/attend/manage alarms and emergencies
- Write or articulate reports during standard and emergency situations
- Undertake physical & electronic patrols / surveillance
- Diagnoses of basic security systems
- Undertake special assignments such as:
    - Transporting valuables
    - Receptionist duties
    - Managing lost and found
    - Educating employees

[7] See, Nalla, M. and Wakefield, A. (forthcoming) The Security Officer: Overextended and Underappreciated. In, M. Gill (editor) *The Handbook of Security*, third edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave; Provost, C. (2017). 'The industry of inequality: why the world is obsessed with private security', *The Guardian*, 12 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/may/12/industry-of-inequality-why-world-is-obsessed-with-private-security.

[8] Shearing, C.D., Farnell, M.B. and Stenning, P.C. (1980) *Contract Security in Ontario*, Toronto: Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

[9] Wakefield, A. (2003) *Selling Security: The Private Policing of Public Space*, Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing; Wakefield, A. (2006). The security officer. Pp.383-407. In Martin Gill (editor), *The Handbook of Security.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan. See also, Button, M. (2019) *Private Policing*. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.

[10] For other good discussions on the role of security officers see: Button, M. (2007). *Security officers and policing: powers, culture and control in the governance of private space.* Hampshire: Ashgate: Jones, T. and Newburn, T. (1998) *Private Security and Public Policing*, Oxford: Clarendon; Rigakos, G. (2002) *The New Parapolice*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[11] Kitteringham, G. (2017) *Security Practitioners Perspectives of the Alberta Basic Security Training Programme.* Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

- Testifying in court
- Crime scene protection
- Conflict de-escalation
- Providing escorts
- Providing customer service

1.10 An amalgam of prior work this may be, but it does not include the range of non-security related duties officers undertake. One other point is relevant here, while the work of officers is diverse, and takes place in every sector (which says something about the ubiquity of security), as Shearing, Farnell and Stenning noted, some duties are likely to be more common in some areas of work, some skill sets only required in some activities, and these may vary by country.[12] These too though are largely unresearched areas.

The competency of security officers/guards

1.11 A wide array of 'competencies' are needed to undertake different tasks effectively. A competency may be interpreted as the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours[13] needed to perform tasks well, and the 'how' of performing job tasks, or what the person needs to do to undertake the job successfully.[14] Further distinction is possible between general competencies reflecting the cognitive and social capabilities (e.g., problem solving, interpersonal skills) required for job performance, and technical competencies which are focussed on the requirements necessary to perform a specific job.[15]

1.12 Within the security sector what are termed 'competency models' have been developed which seek to depict the specific competencies needed to conduct security work. One of the most significant evolved from a collaboration between Apollo Education Group and the University of Phoenix. It lists 22 competencies for security

[12] See for example, Button, M. (2019). *Private Policing* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge; Nalla, M. K., Gurinskaya, A., & Rafailova, D. (2017) Youth perceptions of private security guard industry in Russia. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, *12*(4), 543-556. doi:10.1080/19361610.2017.1354277

[13] See for example, CareerOneStop, "Develop a Competency Model," 2014, http://www.careeronestop.org/ COMPETENCYMODEL/userguide_competency.aspx.

[14] See, Shippman, J. S., Ash, R. A., Carr, L., Hesketh, B., Pearlman, K., Battista, M., Eyde, L. D., Kehoe., J., Prien, E. P., & Sanchez, J. I. (2000). The practice of competency modeling. Personnel Psychology, 53, 703-740. p. 706. Other reference points include Barnard, A. & Lubbe, L. (2013). Security guarding: a competency model. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, Vol. 37 (1) 79-96; Employment and Training Administration. (2020). *Enterprise Security Competency Model*. Washington: United States Department of Labor. https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/Competency-Models/industry-models-help.aspx. & https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/Competency-Models/pyramid-home.aspx; Mulder, M. (2013). Conceptions of professional competence in Springer International Handbooks of Education. Submitted for publication in S. Billett, C. Harteis, H. Gruber (Eds). *International Handbook on Research into professional and practice-based learning.* Section: Professions and the workplace. Springer; Palacios, K.P. (2019). *Progressive Levels of Security Competency: Manual for competency evaluation of Security Professionals.* Naples, Florida: International Foundation for Protection Officers; PSO Committee. (2019). *Private Security Officer Selection and Training Guideline. ASIS PSO-2019.* Alexandria: ASIS International.

[15] See, Shippman et al, (2000) *op cit*.

professionals.[16] It is a helpful and important reference point albeit it has a limited application here for two reasons. The first is that it focusses on managers and directors rather than frontline staff.[17] The second is that the work has yet to be evaluated.

1.13 Improving the competency of security operatives though has been a focal point for countries around the world specifically in initiating and stepping-up their regulation of work – which has taken different forms[18] - and particularly those on the frontline.[19] It has generally required workers to be better trained, although views and experiences of training programmes suggest they are something of a mixed bag in terms of effectiveness.[20] With more skills companies have been able to pay more, attracting better recruits working in better conditions. There is some evidence that regulation has improved the performance of security operatives albeit not eliminated problems altogether.[21]

1.14 Other initiatives have focussed on developing 'standards' and 'guidelines'. Training has been a focus with wide variations in the statutory stipulation of the number of minimum hours required and the skills to be covered. Beyond the obvious need to improve competence, training has served another purpose in increasing the officers/guards' perception of their self-worth.[22] Indeed, in a world where they often feel underappreciated training serves as a confidence re-enforcer.[23] That said, attempts to measure the effectiveness of training have often been

[16] See Apollo Education Group/University of Phoenix (2015) Competency Models for Enterprise Security and Cybersecurity: Research-Based Frameworks for talent Solutions, www.apollo.edu/content/dam/apolloedu/microsite/security_industry/AEG-UOPX%20Security%20Competency%20Models%20report.pdf

[17] That said, the output from this work could be used to develop the next level on the competency model for security officers, please see Appendix 1.

[18] Button, M. and Stiernstedt, P. (2018). Comparing Private Security Regulation in the European Union. *Policing and Society*, 28(4), 398-414; CoESS. (2013). *Private Security Services in Europe: CoESS Facts and Figures 2013*, Wemmel: Confederation of European Security Services.

[19] For a discussion, see: Stiernstedt, P., Button, M., Prenzler, T. and Sarre, R. (2019) The 'three pillars model of regulation': a fusion of governance models for private security. *Security Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-019-00224-3

[20] For a good discussion of training programmes see, Kitteringham, G. Garrett, D. and Livingstone, K. (2022, forthcoming), Training and Education within the Security Sector: Challenges and Opportunities for Development. In M. Gill (editor) *The Handbook of Security* (third edition), Basingstoke: Palgrave; Kitteringham (2017) *op cit*; also, Bietsch, T.M. (2018) *National standardization for private security officer training and hiring practices*. MSc Thesis, American Public University; Garrett, D. (2016) *Private Security Career Paths: Establishing the Foundations of a Structured Progression Model for the Manned Guarding Sector*. Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.

[21] Security Industry Authority. (2010b). *The Impact of Regulation on the Security Guard Sector*. London; Mawby, R. and Gill, M. (2017) Critiquing the Regulation of Private Security in the UK: Views from Inside the Sector. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice. 41, 4, pp 259-272.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2017.1364282; Sarre, R. and Prenzler, T. (2011). *Private Security and Public Interest: Exploring Private Security Trends and Directions for Reform in the New Era of Plural Policing*. Sydney: Australian Security Industry Association Limited.

[22] Cobbina, J. E., M. K. Nalla, and K. A. Bender (2016) Security officers' attitudes towards training and their work environment. *Security Journal*, 29, 3, pp. 385-399.

[23] A study in South Korea has reported that the views of the public and those of supervisors are key determinants of improving officers/guards' self-image, see: Seung Yeop Paek, Nalla, M.K., Lee, J. and Gurinskaya, A. (forthcoming) The Effect of Perceived Citizen Views and Supervisor Support on Private Security Officers' Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Self-legitimacy. *Security Journal*.

narrowly focussed on the number of hours performed for example,[24] rather the content or the skills acquired and used to improve practice.

1.15 The industry itself has at various points launched campaigns to highlight improving competence and working practices.[25] One recent example has attempted to draw attention to the merits of using 'security officer' or 'protection officer' to distinguish the modern security operative from the hapless 'security guard' of the past, albeit this is contested territory. Indeed, a part of the problem is that the words 'guard', and 'security officer' are sometimes used interchangeably, sometimes refer to different types of workers (as is the case in India), and sometimes the word 'guard' is the norm (in some Canadian provinces the word 'guard' is required to be used) and in others is viewed as a pejorative term. In the title we have used the word 'professional', another contested word, as an umbrella term, and throughout this report the words 'officer/guard' and 'frontline worker' interchangeably.

1.16 Attention to other factors is necessary too; security officers are often dissatisfied with their lot. It emanates from a variety of influences but includes: working in dangerous environments and suffering from violent assaults[26], while often lacking the support of supervisors and colleagues,[27] and a lack of training/supervision meaning customers sometimes being made to feel like suspects themselves,[28] and as poor relations to other employees,[29] sometimes not being afforded the same level of access to workplace facilities,[30] while suffering from poor pay and limited opportunities to progress.[31]

1.17 On the positive side there is some indication progress is being made. For example, despite some general reservations from police officers about the work of security officers[32], there is some evidence that in some locales at least police perceptions of security officers are improving.[33] Similarly, with the public, while there has been general

[24] Bietsch, T. (2018) *National Standardization for Private Security Officer Training and Hiring Practices.* A Masters Thesis. American Public University.
[25] See, for example: https://www.bsia.co.uk/hidden-workforce
[26] Koeppen, B. and Hopkins, M. (2020). Security guards as victims of violence: using organisational support theory to understand how support for victims could have positive implications for the security industry. *Security Journal*, 1-24 (available online).
[27] Nalla, M. K., Paek, S. Y. and Lim, S. S. (2017). The influence of organizational and environmental factors on job satisfaction among security guards in Singapore. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, *50*(4), 548-565.
[28] Gooptu, N. (2013). Servile sentinels of the city: Private security guards, organized informality, and labour in interactive services in globalized India. *International Review of Social History*, *58*(1), 9-38.
[29] Noronha, E., Chakraborty, S. and D'Cruz, P. (2020). 'Doing dignity work': Indian security guards' interface with precariousness. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *162*(3), 553-575.
[30] Nalla, M.K. and Cobbina, J. E. (2017). Environmental factors and job satisfaction: The case of private security guards. *Security journal*, *30*(1), 215-226.
[31] Gill, M. and Howell, C. (2012) *The Security Sector in Perspective*, Leicester: Perpetuity Research.
[32] Gill, M. (2015) Senior Police Officers' Perspectives on Private Security: Sceptics, Pragmatists and Embracers. *Policing and Society*. 25(3): 276-293. DOI:10.1080/10439463.2013.865736
[33] Nalla, M.K., Johnson, J., and Meško, G. (2009). "Are Police and Security Personnel

public concern about their competence so too there is evidence that impressions are getting better, in some contexts anyway, albeit results are mixed.[34] This is important. As noted above perceptions of the work of security officers feed into general perceptions of the private security world. There is now a growing body of research that highlights the enormously positive, and often essential role of the private security sector generally to protecting the national infrastructure, communities, organisations and individuals.

Thinking about the role of the frontline worker

1.18 One of the key learnings of the security sector from Covid-19 is that its work generally, and that of security officers/guards specifically, is 'essential',[35] and yet largely unheralded. Those on the frontline are frequently the first point of call in any incident including emergencies; in so doing they avoid placing a demand on public services; when public services are needed they provide information, intelligence and or evidence that can assist them and save on costs and expedite work in process including the apprehension, investigation and prosecution of offenders; they can provide succour to victims even helping to save lives; in addition to helping to manage crime and threats they also serve to deter them; they can be trained to deal with emergencies and can be crucial to maintaining safe operations during a crisis; and they act as a reference point for security advice where they are deployed.

1.19 These are just some key benefits, but there are other important reasons for being concerned with the competence of frontline security workers, and that includes managing some of the dangers of work not being carried out competently. Clearly it can result in not deterring crime or managing it well or protecting the assets of the organisation as a whole. But it is more than that.

1.20 Because security work is so often conducted in private places, what Shearing and Stenning called 'mass private property',[36] there has always been a concern that it will lead to private and inequitable justice.

Warming up to Each Other? A Comparison of Officers' Attitudes in Developed, Emerging, and Transitional Economies." Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management, 32(3):508-52

[34] For good discussions see, Doyle, M., Frogner, L., Andershed, H., & Andershed, A. (2016). Feelings of safety in the presence of the police, security guards, and police volunteers. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research, 22*(1), 19-40. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy1.apus.edu/10.1007/s10610-015-9282-x; Nalla, M.K., Hoffman, V.J.,and Kenneth E. Christian, K.E. (1996). "Security Guards' Perceptions of Their Relationship With Police Officers and the Public in Singapore." *Security Journal* 7(4): 281-286; van Steden, R., & Nalla, M. K. (2010). An Ambiguous Occupation: Citizen satisfaction with private security guards in the Netherlands: Perceptions of an ambiguous occupation. *European Journal of Criminology, 7*(3), 214-234

[35] https://www.alberta.ca/critical-worker-benefit.aspx and https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/04/15/2016289/0/en/Recognizing-the-Essential-Public-Safety-Role-of-Private-Security-During-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.html.

[36] Shearing, C. and Stenning, P. (1981). Modern Private Security: Its Growth and Implications, in Tonry, M. and Morris, N. (eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The specific concern regarding frontline workers, who are most often presented as a recognised point of authority, is that they may implement (potentially) unfair rules unjustly or commit criminal acts (of which there has long been identified evidence[37], and still is[38]) which are not visible and enable them to avoid prosecution in the criminal justice system.

1.21 Indeed, there have also been longstanding concerns about the independence and credibility of security officers in that they are accountable to those who pay. Yet, evidence suggests security staff generally share the same commitment to fairness and justice with law enforcement,[39] and many of those that work in the security sector value the opportunity to protect other people and organisations.[40]

1.22 It is clear then that the competence of frontline security staff working in a range of (private) contexts is an issue of broader public significance. And the potential value of a competent (private) emergency service, supplementing that provided by the state, is important. Improved competence is also key to solving the image issue. Moreover, and despite the existence of a range of high-profile surveys, such as the Rand study, [41] the initial Hallcrest report 1985[42], and a follow up report Hallcrest produced 5 years later,[43] and an ASIS Foundation[44] study in response, in part to 9/11, surveys, and especially comparative ones incorporating a focus on the competency of security officers have been rare. It is against this background that this study was launched.

1.23 It has involved a survey of security officers/guards, in nine countries: Canada, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Nigeria, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and the USA. In Appendix 2 we have included details of the methodology. In short, questions focussed on the range of tasks undertaken; the level of knowledge necessary for each and the difficulties encountered in conducting them; the competence of officers and the level of training received[45]; and their thoughts on licensing.

[37] Kakalik, S.J. and Wildhorn, S. (1971). *Private Police in the United States: Findings and Recommendations*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
[38] See, Prenzler, T. and Sarre, R. (2008). Developing a Risk Profile and Model Regulatory System for the Security Industry. *Security Journal*, 21(4), 264-277.
[39] van Steden, R. Z. Van Der Wal, and K. Lasthuizen (2015) Overlapping values, mutual prejudices: empirical research into the ethos of police officers and private security guards. Administration & Society 47, 3, pp. 220-243; White, A. and Gill, M (2013) The Transformation of Policing: From Ratios to Rationalities. *British Journal of Criminology*. 53, 1, January, pp. 74-93.
[40] Gill, M. and Howell, C. and McGeer, C. (2018) *Understanding influences on security as a career/job choice: what those working in the security sector think*. Tunbridge Wells: Perpetuity Research.
[41] Kakalik, S.J. and Wildhorn, S. (1971) *op cit*.
[42] Cunningham, W,. Strauchs, J, and van Meter, C. (1985) *The Hallcrest Report: Private Security and Police in America*. Report for the National Institute of Justice.
[43] Cunningham, et al (1990) *op cit.*
[44] ASIS Foundation (undated) *Security Report: Scope and Emerging Trends, Executive Summary*. Alexandria: ASIS Foundation.
[45] In some countries at least this has largely moved on-line at the time of the pandemic. See an unpublished survey conducted by SIA (2020) Covid-19 Training Providers Survey Results, June 2020.

Section 2. Survey Findings

The sample

2.1 The findings are based on 10,625 responses[46]. We used the following definition to enable individuals to determine whether they were suitable to take part in the survey:

'A security officer or guard is typically a frontline worker involved in protecting a premises against crime and other threats. It may involve patrolling, implementing security/technology measures, controlling access, maintaining order, enforcing regulations, and/or offering a reassuring presence. A security officer/guard can be employed and based in any location; the job will typically (but not always) involve wearing a uniform. The individual may have responsibility only for themselves or act in a supervisory capacity'

2.2 Of those that indicated the country they work in (96%, n=10,179) three fifths were from the USA (61%), one fifth were from the UK (19%) and less than a tenth were from Canada (7%). The full breakdown is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Country the respondent works in (n=10,179)

Country	Number (n)	Percent (%)
USA	6196	61%
UK	1935	19%
Canada	663	7%
Nigeria	376	4%
Ireland	357	4%
India	231	2%
Ecuador	199	2%
Saudi Arabia	146	1%
South Korea	76	1%

2.3 Acknowledging that security officers have a vast range of different job titles, respondents were asked to indicate, which of a number of job titles, most closely reflects their current role. Table 2 shows the breakdown of respondents by job title.

[46] The number of responses to each question vary as all questions were optional, therefore respondents could choose which questions they wanted to answer. In addition, some dropped out before completing the survey.

Table 2: Job title of respondent (n=10,543)

Job Title	Number (n)	Percent (%)
Uniformed security officer/guard	3988	38%
Uniformed security supervisor	2882	27%
Door supervisor/Bouncer/Door man/woman	2019	19%
CCTV Operator/Central Station Alarm Respondent/Surveillance Specialist	1100	10%
Cash-In-Transit/Armoured Car Guard	385	4%
Undercover Store Detective/Loss Prevention	169	2%

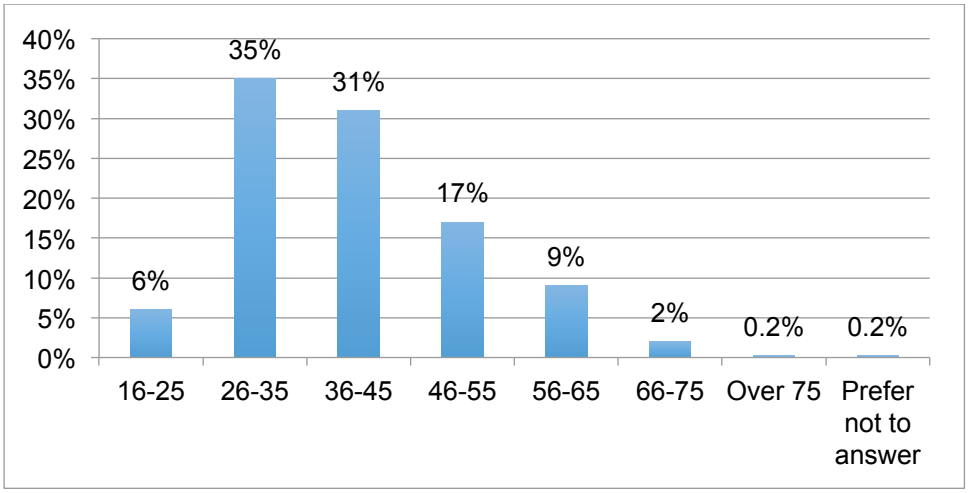
2.4 The majority of respondents were male (76%) however over a fifth were female (22%). This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender of respondents (n=10,532)

Gender	Number (n)	Percent (%)
Male	7984	76%
Female	2310	22%
Other	157	2%
Prefer not to state	81	1%

2.5 A third of respondents were aged 26-35 (35%), nearly as many were aged 36-45 (31%). In total more than a quarter were 46 or older (28%). The full distribution by age is displayed in Figure 1.

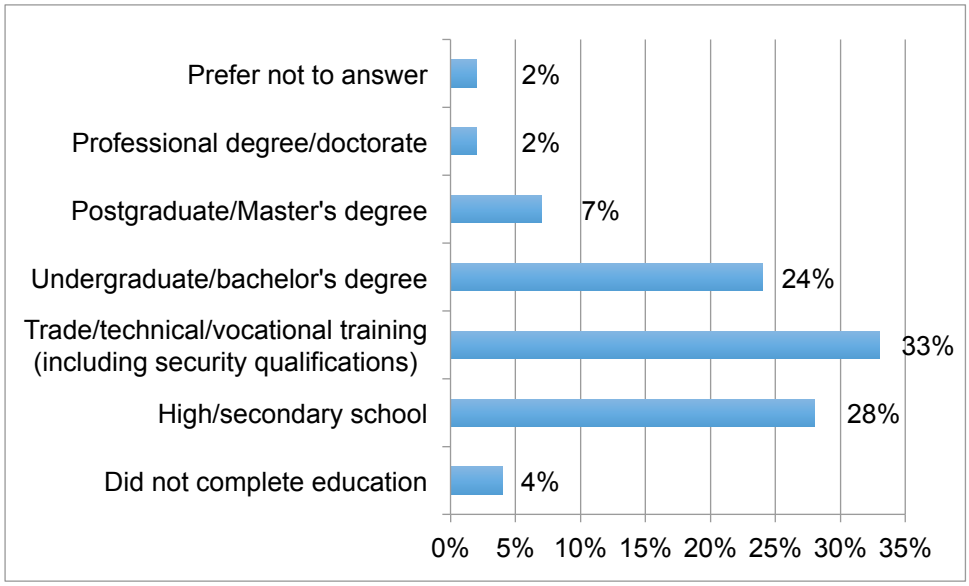
Figure 1: Age range of respondents (n=10,587)



2.6 Respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education that they had completed. Very few respondents had not completed any education (4%). A third had trade/technical/vocational training (33%), over a quarter had completed high/secondary school (28%) and a

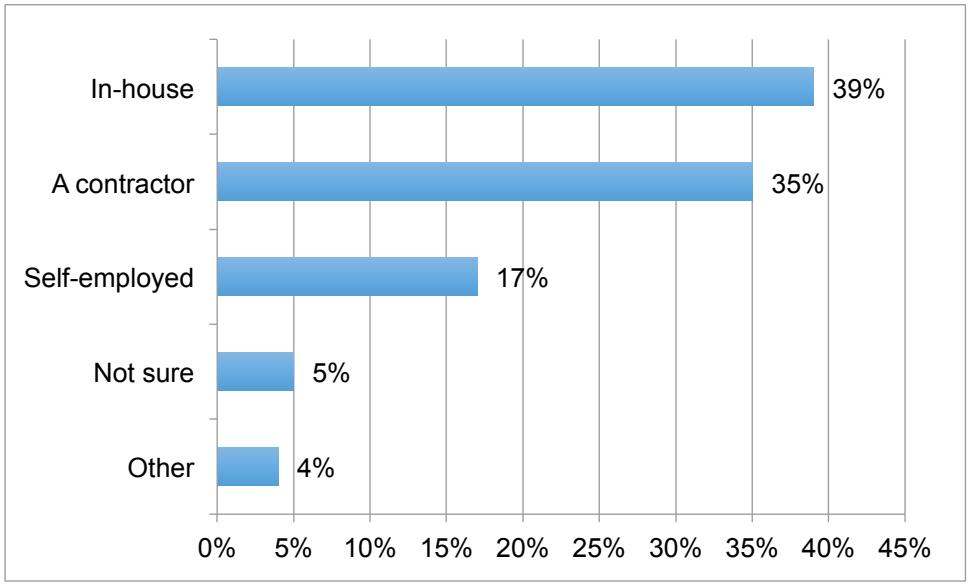
quarter had an undergraduate/bachelor's degree (24%). This suggests that some security officer/guards are quite well educated. The full breakdown is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Highest level of education completed (n=10,578)



2.7 Respondents were typically employed in-house (39%) or by a contractor (35%). The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Type of employment (n=10,503)



2.8 Respondents were asked to indicate which sector they provide security in (if they work in more than one, they were asked to select the one they spend most time working in or that they have worked in the longest). All of the sectors listed were represented, with banking/finance (11%) and colleges/universities (9%) the most common. The full results by sector are shown in Table 4.

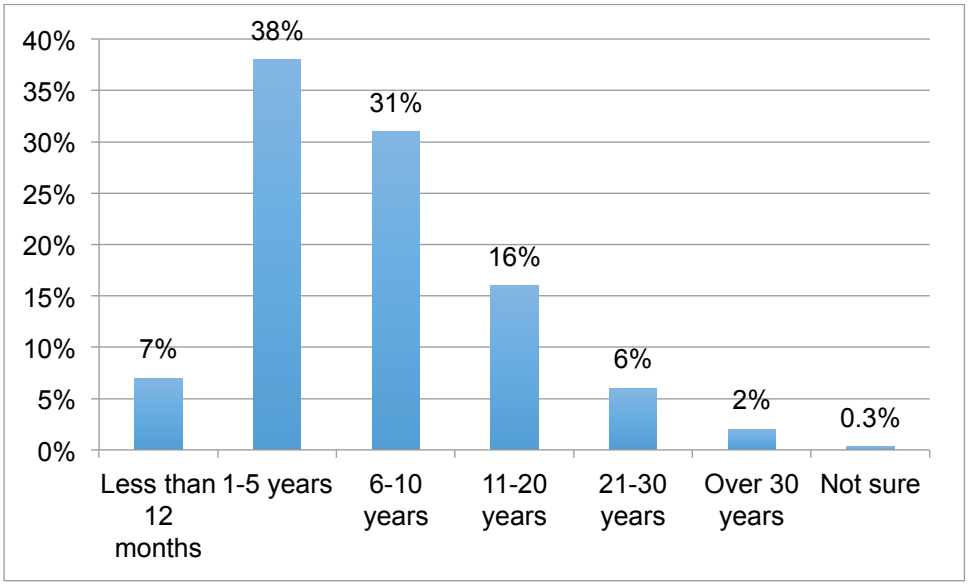
Table 4: Sector the respondent provides security in (n=10,571)

Sector	Number (n)	Percent (%)
Banking/financial services	1195	11%
Colleges/universities	986	9%
Government services	712	7%
Supermarkets/food services	650	6%
Property management/real estate	630	6%
Construction	605	6%
Other[47]	603	6%
Executive Protection	594	6%
Emergency response	584	6%
Hospitality/entertainment	570	5%
Manufacturing	561	5%
Engineering/design	507	5%
Healthcare	507	5%
Transportation and warehousing	372	4%
Services/sales/equipment	332	3%
Agriculture/forestry/hunting/fishing	319	3%
Technology	181	2%
Resource Extraction	158	2%
Supplement to law enforcement and/or military	155	2%
Religious institution/houses of worship	141	1%
Utilities	105	1%
Humanitarian	104	1%

2.9 Nearly two fifths of respondents had been working in security for between 1 and 5 years (38%) and close to a third had done so for between 6 and 10 years (31%). Figure 4 shows the full breakdown by length of time.

[47] Those that provided an explanation of 'other' typically named the security company they are employed by, or simply stated that they are 'employed' or listed a job title such as 'security guard'. There was no clear indication of any additional sectors than those listed, that respondents worked for.

Figure 4: Length of time working in security (n=10,587)



Perceptions of working in security

2.10 To gain a sense of how respondents perceived their role, a number of statements were presented about working in security and respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each.

2.11 Close to three fifths of respondents (59%) agreed with the notion that *it provides an opportunity to serve the public*. Agreement here was more prevalent among respondents from Nigeria than the other countries[48]; it was also more prevalent among older respondents[49].

2.12 A similar proportion agreed *the hours suit me* (57%). Those in the 66-75 year age group were most likely (than other age groups) to agree[50].

2.13 Over half of respondents agreed that *the work is interesting* (55%). Respondents currently in a door supervisor/bouncer role were least likely to view the work as interesting than those in other roles[51]. Respondents that had been working in security for over 30 years were the most likely to agree that the work is interesting[52] although there was no overall pattern by length of time in security.

2.14 Just over half of the sample saw their work in security *as a career* (53%). Agreement with this view was most prevalent among respondents from Nigeria[53] and least prevalent among respondents from the UK[54]. It was also most prevalent among undercover store

[48] 68% of Nigeria respondents agreed compared with the average of 59%.
[49] 57% of 16-25 year olds agreed, rising up to 67% of 66-65 year olds.
[50] 69% of 66-75 year olds agreed compared with the average of 57%.
[51] 46% door supervisor/bouncers agreed compared with the average of 55%.
[52] 66% of those working in security for over 30 years agreed, compared with the average of 55%.
[53] 64% agreed.
[54] 46% agreed.

detective / loss prevention respondents than other roles[55]. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those in the 66-75 year age group were least likely to view security as a career[56]. Respondents that receive on-going training as part of their current role were more likely to view working in security as a career than those that do not[57].

2.15 There was a direct correlation between time spent working in security and agreement that *the working conditions are good* – with respondents working in security for the shortest time most likely to agree conditions are good and respondents working in security for the longest time least likely to agree[58]. Respondents that receive on-going training in their role were more likely to agree than those that do not[59].

2.16 Undercover store detective/loss prevention officers less commonly agreed that *the job is easy* than those in other roles[60]. Generally, those in the younger age groups were more likely to agree the job is easy than those in the older age groups[61]. There was a direct correlation between time spent working in security and agreement that the work is easy – with respondents working in security for the shortest time most likely to agree it is easy and respondents working in security for the longest time least likely to agree[62].

2.17 The greatest level of disagreement in respect of the areas explored was in relation to the suggestion that *it is the first job I could get* (29% disagreed) although overall more respondents agreed than disagreed. Disagreement was more prevalent in the UK and Ireland than the other countries[63]; and more prevalent among the respondents in the older age groups[64].

2.18 Similarly, disagreement was relatively high in relation to the suggestion that *it pays well* (23%), especially in the UK,[65] although overall more respondents agreed than disagreed. Further, cash-in-transit/armoured car guards were more likely to agree that *it pays well* than respondents currently in other roles[66]. Those employed by a contractor were least likely to agree *it pays well* while those employed in-house were most likely to agree[67]. Respondents that had been working in security for a

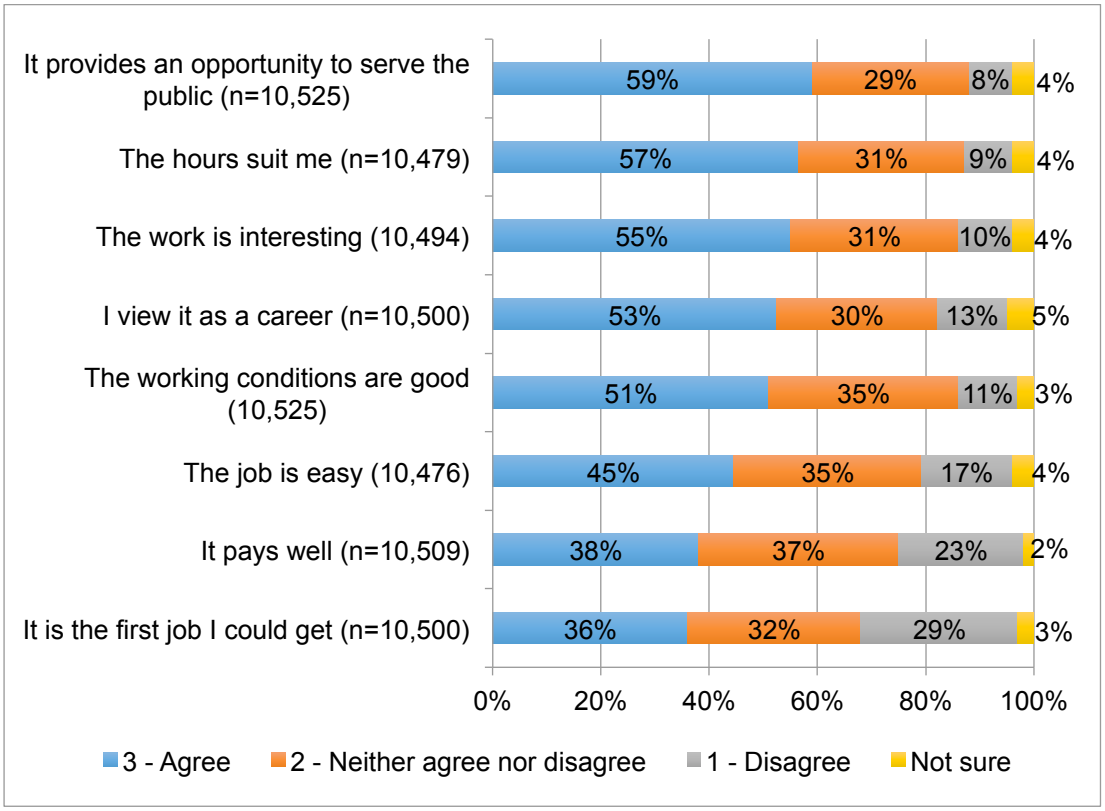
[55] 62% of undercover store detective / loss prevention respondents agreed.
[56] 36% of 66-75 year olds agreed compared with the average of 53%.
[57] 56% of those that receive on-going training agreed, compared with 38% of those that do not.
[58] 56% of those working in security for less than 12 months agreed, falling to 40% of those working in security for more than 30 years.
[59] 54% of those that receive on-going training agreed, compared with 36% of those that do not.
[60] 31% agreed, compared with the average of 45%.
[61] Those in the age groups up to 45 agreed at a proportion (45-48%) above the average of 45%, while those in age groups 46 and over agreed at a proportion (34-41%) below the average.
[62] 53% of those working in security for less than 12 months agreed, falling to 26% of those working in security for more than 30 years.
[63] 47% disagreed of UK respondents and 36% of Ireland respondents disagreed, compared with the average of 23%.
[64] Those in the age groups up to 45 disagreed at a proportion (22-27%) below the average of 29%, while those in age groups 46 and over disagreed at a proportion (37-58%) above the average.
[65] 42% of UK respondents disagreed, compared with the average of 23%.
[66] 51% of cash-in-transit/armoured car guards agreed, compared with the average of 38%.
[67] 47% of in-house respondents agreed it pays well; compared with 29% of contracted respondents.

shorter timespan (10 years or less) were more likely to agree *it pays well* than those who had been working in security for longer (more than 10 years)[68]. Respondents that receive on-going training were much more likely to agree *it pays well* then those that do not[69].

2.19 Notably, across all the statements, around a third of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with each aspect that was explored. This could be interpreted generally as indicative of apathy towards the role.

2.20 The full breakdown is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Perception of working in security



2.21 The group of respondents that indicated that they had not completed their education answered somewhat differently to respondents that had completed high/secondary school education (or a higher-level qualification); generally speaking they had a less positive impression of working in security; specifically, those who had not completed their education were less likely to agree that:

- it provides the opportunity to serve the public (44% compared with the average of 59%);
- the work is interesting (43% compared with the average of 55%);

[68] 44% of those working in security for less than 12 months agreed, compared with 17% of those working in security for more than 30 years.
[69] 42% of those who receive in-going training agreed, compared with 19% of those who do not receive on-going training.

- the working conditions are good (39% compared with the average of 51%);
- I view it as a career (42% compared with the average of 53%);
- The hours suit me (47% compared with the average of 57%).

2.22 There was no clear overall pattern, but there was some variation on views by the sector that respondents currently work in:

- Respondents in the banking/financial services sector were the most likely to agree that *it pays well* (47%); meanwhile respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the least likely to agree (24%).
- Respondents in the agriculture/forestry/hunting/fishing sector and executive protection sector (each 46%) were the most likely to agree *it is the first job I could get*[70]; meanwhile respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the least likely to agree (27%).
- Respondents in the emergency response sector were the least likely to agree that *the working conditions are good* (42%, compared with the average of 51%).
- Respondents in the healthcare sector and property management /real estate sector (each 64%) were the most likely to agree *the work is interesting;* meanwhile respondents in the construction sector and engineering/design sector (each 46%) were the least likely to agree.
- Respondents in the executive protection sector (52%) were the most likely to agree that *the job is easy* (52%); meanwhile respondents in the healthcare sector (40%) were the least likely to agree.
- Respondents in the healthcare sector and property management/real estate sector (each 68%) were the most likely to agree that *it provides the opportunity to service the public*; meanwhile respondents in the emergency response sector (47%) were the least likely to agree.
- Respondents in the executive protection sector were the most likely to agree that they *view it as a career* (62%, compared with the average of 53%).
- Respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the most likely to agree that *the hours suit me* (66%); meanwhile respondents in the construction sector (46%) were the least likely to agree.

Nature of respondents work in security

2.23 A number of additional questions were asked to understand the nature of the respondent's role and how they view their work in security.

[70] It is acknowledged that other factors, such as location, may impact on the types of sectors available and therefore the range of job opportunities available.

2.24 For the vast majority of respondents, it is a *full-time role* (81%). Male respondents were more likely to work full time in security than female respondents[71]. Those employed by a contractor and in-house were more likely to work full time in security than the self-employed[72].

2.25 For close to two fifths (37%) it is *a stepping stone (to get experience) to work in another role.* There was a clear trend in responses by age - the youngest respondents were most likely to indicate this, while the older respondents were least likely to[73]. Similarly, the length of time working in security was important here - with those working in security the shortest amount of time, the most likely to see it as a stepping stone, and those working in security the longest amount of time, the least likely to[74].

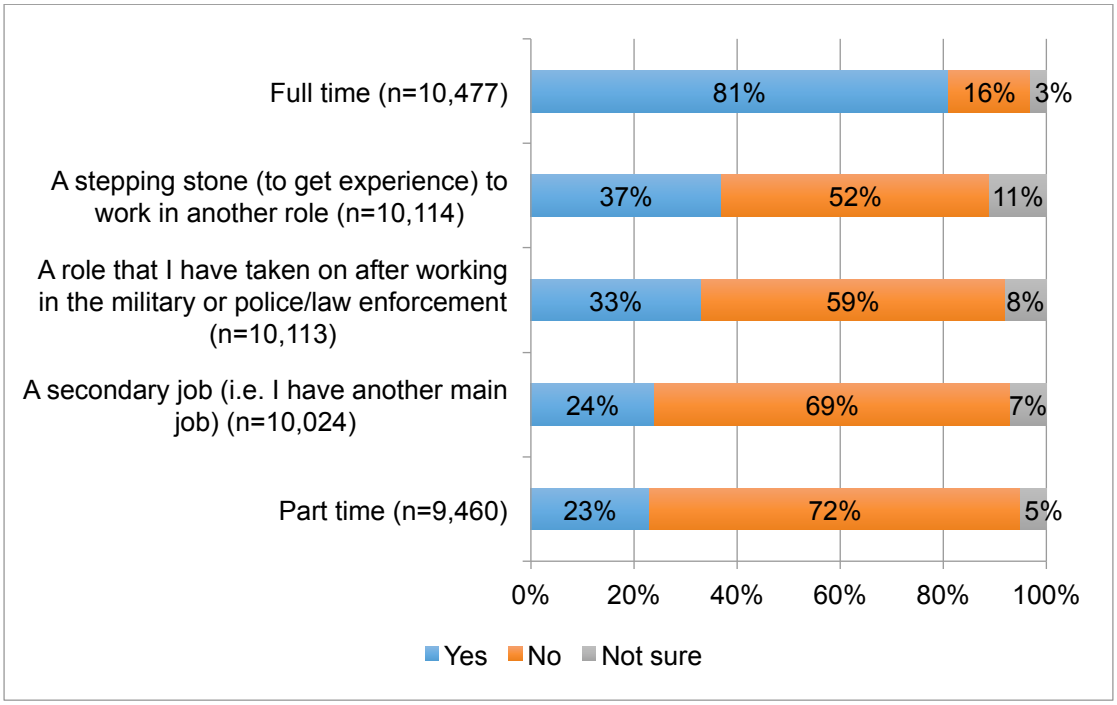
2.26 For a third (33%) of respondents it is *a role taken on after working in the military or police/law enforcement*. Although this career trajectory was least prevalent among the UK respondents[75]. Unsurprisingly, it was also least prevalent among the youngest respondents[76]. It was more common among those self-employed and those employed in-house, than those working for a contractor[77]. It was most common among respondents working in the executive protection sector[78]. It was much more common for those working in security for more than 30 years to have joined after a military or police/law enforcement role than for any other duration of time working in security[79]. It was also more common among respondents whose work requires a licence than respondents who do not[80].

2.27 Less than a quarter indicated the work was *part time* (23%) and a quarter (24%) indicated *it was a secondary job (i.e., they have another main job)*. Both working part time and as a secondary job were least prevalent in the UK[81]. Respondents in a door supervisor/bouncer role more commonly held the role as a secondary job than other roles[82]. Those working in security for more than 30 years were less likely than any other duration to hold the role as a secondary job[83].

[71] 85% of male respondents work full time, compared with 72% of female respondents.
[72] 87% of respondents employed by a contractor and 82% of respondents employed in-house work full time, compared with 71% of self-employed respondents.
[73] 47% of 16-25 years olds indicated it was a stepping-stone, falling to 13% of 66-75 year olds.
[74] 44% of those working in security less than 12 months indicated it was a stepping stone, falling to 16% of those working in security for over 30 years.
[75] 19% of UK respondents indicated it followed work in the military or law enforcement/police, compared with the average of 33%.
[76] 21% of 16 to 25 year olds, compared with the average of 33%.
[77] 41% of self-employed respondents and 37% of in-house respondents, compared with 26% of respondents working for a contractor.
[78] 47% of those working in the executive protection sector, compared with the average of 33%.
[79] 50% of those working in security for more than 30 years, compared with the average of 33%.
[80] 35% of respondents that have a licence indicated it was a role following work in the military or police/law enforcement, compared with 24% who do not have a licence.
[81] 13% of UK respondents indicated they work part time and 10% indicated it was a secondary job.
[82] 33% of door supervisor/bouncers, compared with the average of 24%.
[83] 12% of respondents working in security for more than 30 years, compared with the average of 24%.

2.28 The results are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Nature of respondents work in security



Frequency of tasks

2.29 To gain an understanding of the tasks undertaken by security officers/guards, respondents were asked to indicate whether the tasks presented in the survey were:

- something they do often – 'Core',
- something they do occasionally – 'Marginal'
- or something that is not a part of the role – 'Not applicable'

2.30 Each of the tasks explored was either core or marginal for the majority of respondents (74% or more for each task).

2.31 For more than half of respondents, *carrying out access control* is a core task (54%); it was relatively rare that this was not a part of the role (12%). This was more commonly a core task for uniformed security officer/guards[84] than any of the other security officer/guard roles.

2.32 For close to half of respondents, *undertaking physical patrols* is a core task (48%); for close to a fifth (18%) this was not a part of the role. This was more commonly a 'core' aspect of the role for uniformed security officers/guards[85] and least commonly a 'core' aspect for door supervisors/bouncers and CCTV operator/alarm respondent/ surveillance[86].

[84] 65%
[85] 63%
[86] 32% and 33% respectively

2.33 Notably *customer service* was a core part of the role for more than two fifths (44%) of respondents and was more common than *monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies* (for 39% this was a core task) and *enforcing rules* (for 39% this was a core task).

2.34 *Customer service* was most often a core part of the role for uniformed security officers and least often a core part of the role for door supervisors/bounders and cash-in-transit/ armoured car guards[87].

2.35 Respondents in a CCTV operator/alarm response/surveillance role and door supervisor/bouncer role less commonly indicated that *enforcing rules* is a core part of their work than any of the other security officer/guard roles[88].

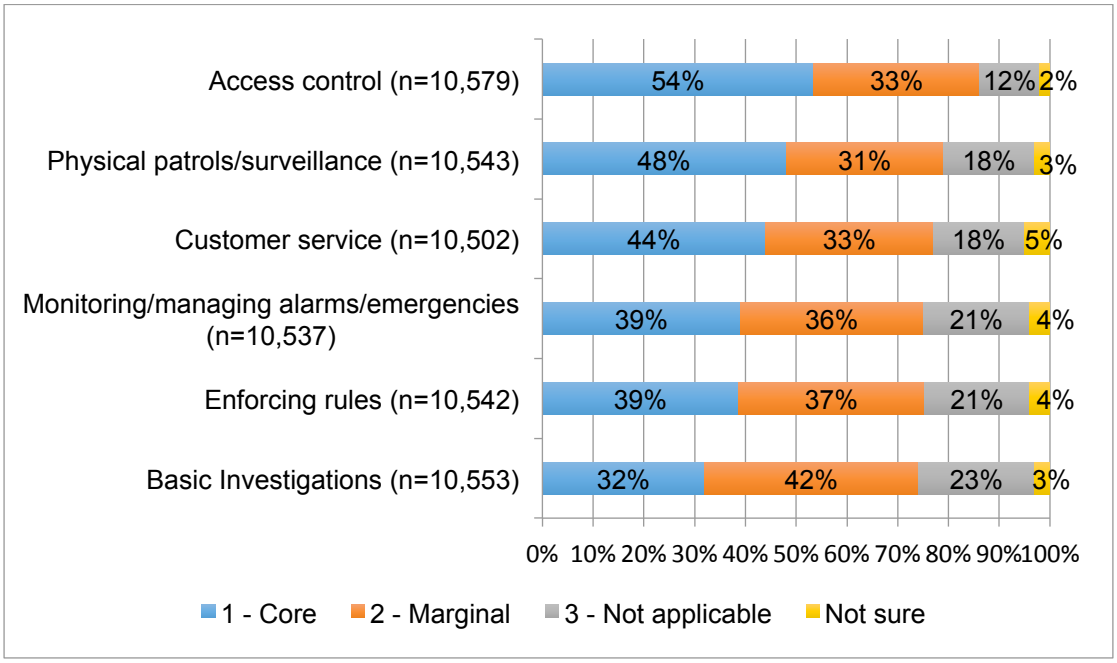
2.36 Respondents in a door supervisor/bouncer role also less commonly indicated that *monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies* is a core part of their role[89].

2.37 The task that was least likely to be a part of the security officer/guard role was *basic investigations* – for two fifths of respondents (42%) this was a marginal/occasional activity and for nearly a quarter (23%) it was not part of the role. Basic investigations were most commonly undertaken by respondents in an undercover store detective/loss prevention role[90].

2.38 The full results are shown in Figure 7.

[87] 62% of uniformed security officers, compared with 25% of door supervisors/bounders and 26% of cash-in-transit/ armoured car guards.
[88] 26% of CCTV operator/alarm response/surveillance role and 27% of door supervisor/bouncer role, compared with the average of 39%.
[89] 27% of door supervisor/bouncers, compared with the average of 39%.
[90] 50% of undercover store detective/loss prevention respondents, compared with the average of 32%.

Figure 7: Frequency that key security tasks are undertaken



2.39 Further analysis showed that there are quite a number of ways in which the frequency of tasks undertaken was impacted by the characteristics of the respondent.

2.40 Notably, across all the tasks explored in the survey, the proportion of UK respondents that indicated each task was 'core' was higher than each of the other countries[91].

2.41 How the respondents are employed had a sizeable impact on how often the tasks explored were carried out. Across all the tasks explored those employed by a contractor were the most likely to carry each out 'often', those self-employed were the least likely to carry each out 'often', and those employed in-house fell between the two[92]. The greatest disparity in frequency of tasks by employment type was in respect of customer service, carrying out access control and undertaking physical patrols/surveillance.

2.42 Also notable, across all the tasks explored, was the proportion of male respondents that indicated each task was 'core'. This was around 10

[91] In the UK: Access control – 76% compared with the average of 54%; Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance – 75% compared with the average of 48%; Customer service – 80% compared with the average of 44%. Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies – 55% compared with the average of 39%; Enforcing rules – 56% compared with the average of 39%; Basic investigations – 39% compared with the average of 32%.

[92] Indicated the task is undertaken 'often':
Customer service: Contractor – 64%, In-house – 34%, Self-employed – 24%.
Carrying out access control: Contractor – 71%, In-house – 48%, Self-employed – 34%.
Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance: Contractor – 64%, In-house – 41%, Self-employed – 27%.
Enforcing rules: Contractor – 50%, In-house – 34%, Self-employed – 24%.
Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies: Contractor – 49%, In-house – 38%, Self-employed – 24%.
Undertaking basic investigations: Contractor – 37%, In-house – 32%, Self-employed – 26%.

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percentage points higher than female respondents[93]. Further research here would be beneficial to add context on how security officer/guard tasks may be allocated differently by gender.

2.43 In a similar way, across all the tasks explored, those that had not completed their general education were less likely to indicate each task was 'core' than those who had achieved high/secondary school education or higher[94]. It would seem that a lack of prior qualifications impacts on how tasks are allocated to security officers/guards in post.

2.44 There was also a correlation by length of time working in security. Respondents working in security the longest, were the most likely to indicate each task is 'core' and those working in security the shortest, the least likely to indicate each task is 'core'[95]. The only exception to this trend was for customer service where this trend largely held true, but with the exception of those working in security less than 12 months[96].

2.45 There were a number of tasks where greater proportions of older respondents indicated these tasks were 'core' than younger respondents, namely – carrying out access control[97], monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies[98], undertaking physical patrols/surveillance[99], and customer service[100].

2.46 There was considerable variation in frequency of the tasks by sector the respondent worked in. Overall, this suggests that the frequency

[93] Proportion where the task is 'core': Access control, males – 58%, females – 44%; Undertaking basic investigations, males – 35%, females – 26%; Enforcing rules, males – 42%, females – 30%; Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies, males – 43%, females – 30%; Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance, males – 53%, females – 35%; Customer service, males – 48%, females – 37%.
[94] Those that had not completed education: Access control – 44% compared with the average of 54%; Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance – 33% compared with the average of 48%; Customer service – 33% compared with the average of 44%. Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies – 28% compared with the average of 39%; Enforcing rules – 26% compared with the average of 39%; Basic investigations – 22% compared with the average of 32%.
[95] Indicated the task is undertaken 'often':
Carrying out access control: Working in security for over 30 years – 77%, less than 12 months – 51%.
Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance: Working in security for over 30 years – 71%, less than 12 months – 46%.
Enforcing rules: Contractor – Working in security for over 30 years – 61%, less than 12 months – 33%.
Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies: Working in security for over 30 years – 59%, less than 12 months – 32%.
Undertaking basic investigations: Working in security for over 30 years – 37%, less than 12 months – 28%.
[96] 50% of those working in security less than 12 months indicated customer service was a 'core' task – which was higher than those working for 1-5 years (38%) and those working for 6-10 years (39%), but lower than all the other durations (i.e., 11-20 years – 55%, 21-30 years – 67%, over 30 years – 82%).
[97] 73% of 56-65 years olds and 72% of 66-75 year olds indicated these were 'core' compared with the average of 54%.
[98] Those in the age groups up to 45 agreed at a proportion (37% each) below the average of 39%, while those in age groups 46 and over agreed at a proportion (42-49%) above the average.
[99] For 65% of 56-65 year olds and 62% of 66-75 years olds this is a 'core' task, compared with the average of 48%.
[100] For 71% of 56-65 year olds and 69% of 66-75 years olds this is a 'core' task, compared with the average of 44%.

with which different security tasks are carried out is linked to the nature of the work and the priorities within different settings:

- Respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the most likely to carry out *access control* 'often' (79%). This was least common among respondents from the agriculture/forestry/hunting/fishing sector and emergency response sector (each 37%).
- Respondents in the supermarket/food services sector were the most likely to carry out *basic investigations* 'often' (45%). This was least common among respondents from the engineering/design sector (each 24%).
- Respondents in the healthcare sector were the most likely to carry out *enforcing rules* 'often' (53%). This was least common among respondents from the construction sector (26%).
- Respondents in the property management/real estate sector were the most likely to carry out *monitoring and managing alarms* 'often' (55%). This was least common among respondents from the agriculture/forestry/hunting/fishing sector and construction sector (each 26%).
- Respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the most likely to undertake *physical patrols/surveillance* 'often' (68%). This was least common among respondents from the engineering/design sector (29%).
- Respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the most likely to undertake *customer service* 'often' (68%). This was least common among respondents from the engineering/design sector (25%).

Difficulty of tasks

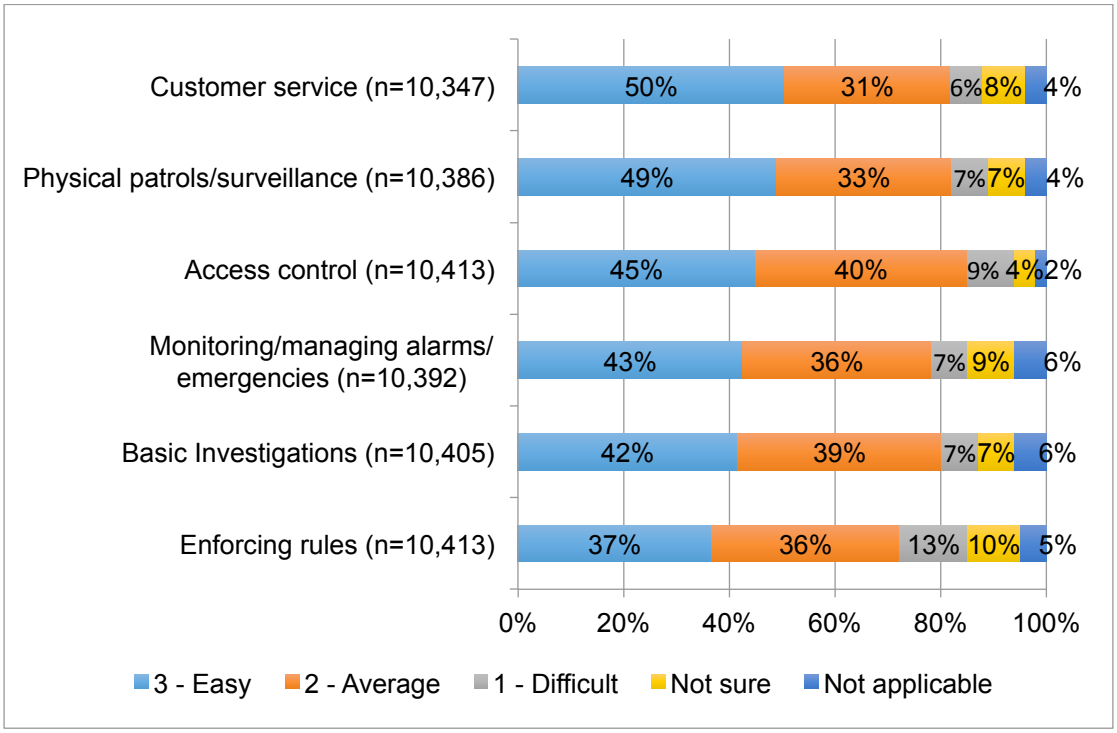
2.47 In respect of the tasks explored above, respondents were also asked to indicate how easy or difficult each was to carry out. Respondents rarely indicated that their tasks were 'difficult', and for each task a greater proportion of respondents rated them as 'easy' than 'average'. The task most commonly rated to be 'difficult' was *enforcing rules* (13%).

2.48 The tasks most commonly identified as 'easy' were *customer service* (50%) and *physical patrols/surveillance* (49%).

2.49 It was also notable that a smaller proportion of respondents indicated the tasks were 'not applicable' to their role for this question than in the previous question. It is possible that although they are not a part of their current role, they have carried them out in the past or are otherwise familiar (for example through the work of colleagues) and therefore opted to submit an opinion.

2.50 Figure 8 shows the results.

Figure 8: Level of difficulty of key security tasks



2.51 Further analysis showed that there were no clear trends between the characteristics of respondents and their perception of how easy/difficult tasks are. Indeed, responses were consistent regardless of gender, education attained, sector currently worked in, and length of time working in security, suggesting that a task being defined as easy or difficult was more a reflection of the context in which it was undertaken than the task itself.

2.52 Nonetheless, some specific variations in responses were apparent. While the responses were fairly consistent among respondents from different age groups, the older respondents were less likely to view *undertaking basic investigations* as easy[101], and more likely to view *customer service* as easy[102]. The youngest age group (16-24 year olds) were the most likely to view *undertaking physical patrols/surveillance* as easy[103].

2.53 USA respondents were very slightly more likely than average to perceive *access control, basic investigations, enforcing rules and monitoring alarms* to be 'easy'[104], although for *undertaking physical*

[101] Those in the age groups up to 45 indicated easy at a proportion (42-47%) at or above the average of 42%, while those in age groups 46 and over indicated easy at a proportion (29-37%) below the average.
[102] 60% of 66-75 year olds and 56% of 56-65 year olds indicated easy, compared with the average of 50%.
[103] 57% of 16-24 year olds indicated undertaking physical patrols/surveillance as easy, compared with the average of 49%.
[104] USA respondents perceiving tasks as easy: Access control – 48% compared with the average of 45%; Undertaking basic investigations 45% compared with the average of 42%; Enforcing rules – 40% compared with the average of 37%; Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies – 45% compared with the average of 43%.

patrols and *customer service*, higher proportions of UK respondents viewed these tasks as easy[105].

2.54 There were some variations by role - uniformed security officers/guards more commonly viewed *customer service* as easy than any other role[106]; and CCTV operator/alarm respondent/surveillance less commonly viewed *undertaking physical patrols/surveillance* as easy than any other role[107].

2.55 Variations by respondents' type of employment also existed among the different tasks explored:

- Carrying out *access control* was more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by contracted and in-house respondents (each 47%) than self-employed respondents (39%)
- Undertaking *basic investigations* was more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by in-house respondents (46%) and self-employed respondents (44%) than contracted respondents (37%).
- *Enforcing rules* was more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by in-house and self-employed respondents (each 40%) than contracted respondents (34%).
- *Monitoring and managing alarms and emergencies* was slightly more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by in-house respondents (45%) than contracted (42%) and self-employed (41%) respondents.
- *Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance* was a little more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by contracted respondents (54%) than in-house (47%) and self-employed (45%) respondents.
- *Customer service* was more commonly perceived to be 'easy' by contracted respondents (56%) than in-house (47%) and self-employed (44%) respondents.

Competence

2.56 Respondents were asked to indicate how competent the security officers/guards that they work with are at a number of activities that feature in security work.

2.57 On the whole, a fairly low proportion of respondents perceived their colleagues to be 'low' in competence, which is encouraging. This was fairly consistent across all 15 activities explored; between 6% and 13% of respondents rated their colleagues as 'low' in each activity.

2.58 For all activities explored a greater proportion of respondents rated their colleagues as 'high' in competence than 'medium', which is also

[105] UK respondents perceiving tasks as easy: Undertaking physical patrols/surveillance – 55% compared with the average of 49%; Customer service – 59% compared with the average of 50%.
[106] 56% thought customer service is easy, compared with the average of 50%.
[107] 40% thought undertaking physical patrols/surveillance is easy compared with the average of 49%.

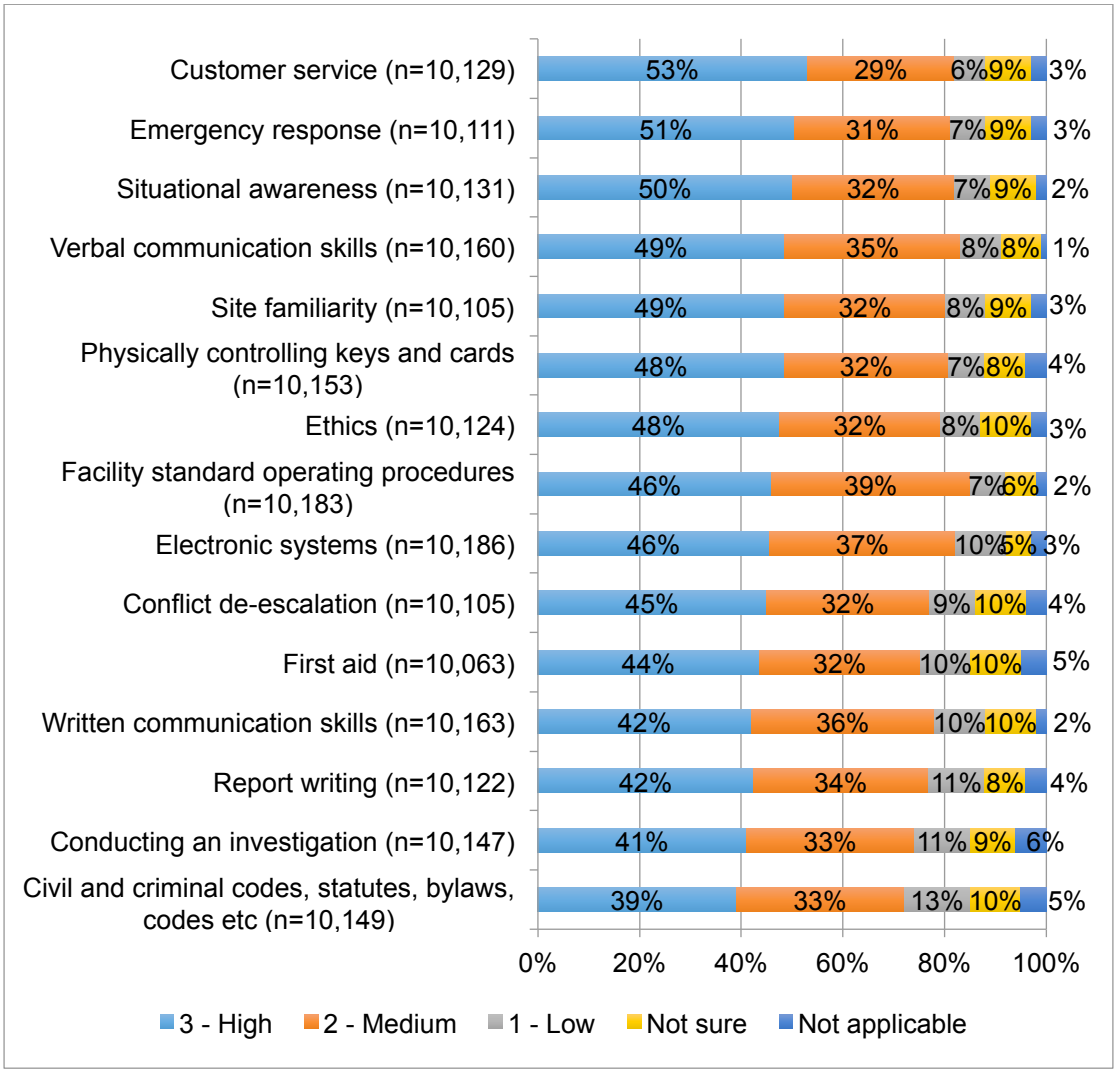
positive. That said, at most 53% of respondents rated colleagues as 'high' in competence. Assuming that to maintain security and provide an effective service, all security officers should hold a high degree of competence in the activities they are set to do, these results suggest that ample room remains for improvement in how well activities are completed.

2.59 Looking at the specific activities, those most commonly perceived to be carried out with 'high' competence were *customer service* (53%), *emergency response* (51%) and *situational awareness* (50%).

2.60 At the other end of the scale, those least commonly perceived to be carried out with 'high' competence were *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc* (39%), *conducting an investigation* (41%) and both *report writing* (42%) and *written communication skills* (42%).

2.61 Figure 9 provides a full breakdown of the results.

Figure 9: Competence in security tasks



2.62 Further analysis showed the only clear trend in respect of perception of colleagues' competence was by whether or not the respondent (generally) receives on-going training as part of their current role. Across all of the tasks explored, those who receive on-going training more commonly viewed their colleagues to be high in competence than those that do not receive on-going training. This was especially so, in respect of *first aid*[108]*, electronic systems*[109], *facility standard operating procedures*[110], and *emergency response*[111]. This would suggest that on-going training is an important factor in performing competently.

2.63 Generally, responses were fairly consistent regardless of the respondents' characteristics. There were no notable variations by gender or by the level of education achieved by respondents. There were, however, some specific variations observed.

2.64 While perception was largely consistent regardless of the length of time respondents had worked in security, there was one notable difference – in respect of *site familiarity*, those who had worked in security the longest – namely 21-30 years (61%) and over 30 years (59%) were more likely to regard colleagues as highly competent than any other duration (the average was 49%).

2.65 There were some, mostly small, variations in the proportion of respondents that indicated competence was high by country. The most consistent trend (but not for all activities) was respondents from Ireland and India rated competence as 'high' at a proportion below the average; in other words, they were generally more doubtful about the competence of their colleagues. The most notable variations from the average include:

- Customer Service – 41% of India respondents and 44% of Ireland respondents viewed competence as high – compared with the average of 53%.
- Situational awareness – 38% of India respondents viewed competence as high – compared with the average of 50%
- Emergency response – 44% of India respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 51%
- Site familiarity – 65% of UK respondents viewed competence as high – above the average of 49%
- Physically controlling keys and cards – 35% of India respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 48%
- Electronic systems - 33% of Ireland respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 46%
- Written communication skills – 34% of Ireland respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 42%

[108] 46% of those receiving on-going training and 30% of those who do not.
[109] 49% of those receiving on-going training and 33% of those who do not.
[110] 48% of those receiving on-going training and 35% of those who do not.
[111] 53% of those receiving on-going training and 41% of those who do not.

- Report writing – 30% of Ireland respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 42%

2.66 The only notable variations by respondents role were:

- Door supervisors/bouncers less commonly perceived their colleagues to have high competence in *site familiarity*[112]
- Cash-in-transit/armoured car guards more commonly perceived their colleagues to have high competence in *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc.*[113]

2.67 The only notable variations by sector respondents work in were:

- Respondents in the emergency response sector less commonly perceived their colleagues to have high competence in *physically controlling keys and card*[114]
- Respondents in the colleges/universities sector less commonly perceived their colleagues to have high competence in *site familiarity*[115]
- Respondents in the executive protection sector more commonly perceived their colleagues to have high competence in *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc.*[116]

2.68 Notable variations by age of respondent included:

- Older respondents less commonly viewed colleagues as high competence in *conducting investigations*[117]
- Older respondents more commonly viewed colleagues as high competence in *site familiarity*[118]
- Older respondents less commonly viewed colleagues as high competence in *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes, etc.*[119]

2.69 Finally, the only notable variations by employment type were:

- Contracted respondents were more likely to view colleagues as high competence in *site familiarity* than in-house and self-employed respondents[120]

[112] 41%, compared with the average of 49%.
[113] 51% compared with the average of 39%.
[114] 38%, compared with the average of 48%.
[115] 39%, compared with the average of 49%.
[116] 52% compared with the average of 39%.
[117] Those in the age groups up to 45 indicated high competence at a proportion (42-45%) above the average of 41%, while those in age groups 46 and over indicated high competence at a proportion (28-39%) below the average.
[118] 61% of 66-75 year olds indicated high competence, compared with the average of 49%.
[119] 25% of 66-75 year olds and 29% of 56-65 year olds indicated high/competent, compared with the average of 39%.
[120] 56% of contracted respondents indicated high competence, compared with 46% of in-house and 41% of self-employed respondents.

- In-house and self-employed respondents were more likely to view colleagues as high competence in *first aid* than contracted respondents[121]
- In-house and self-employed respondents were the most likely to view colleagues high competence in *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc.* than contracted respondents[122]

Training

2.70 Finally in respect of these activities, respondents were asked how effective any training was that they had received.

2.71 The picture was very similar to that above in respect of competence. The training received was rarely perceived to be 'low (not effective)'; between 5% and 9% of respondents rated their training as ineffective in each activity.

2.72 For all activities explored a greater proportion of respondents rated their training as 'high (effective)' than 'medium (adequate)'. That said, at most (the maximum figure for any of the tasks we looked at) 55% of respondents rated the training as 'high (effective)'. Assuming that the goal should be for training to be high/effective, these results also suggest there is scope for improvements to be made to the training provided for these activities.

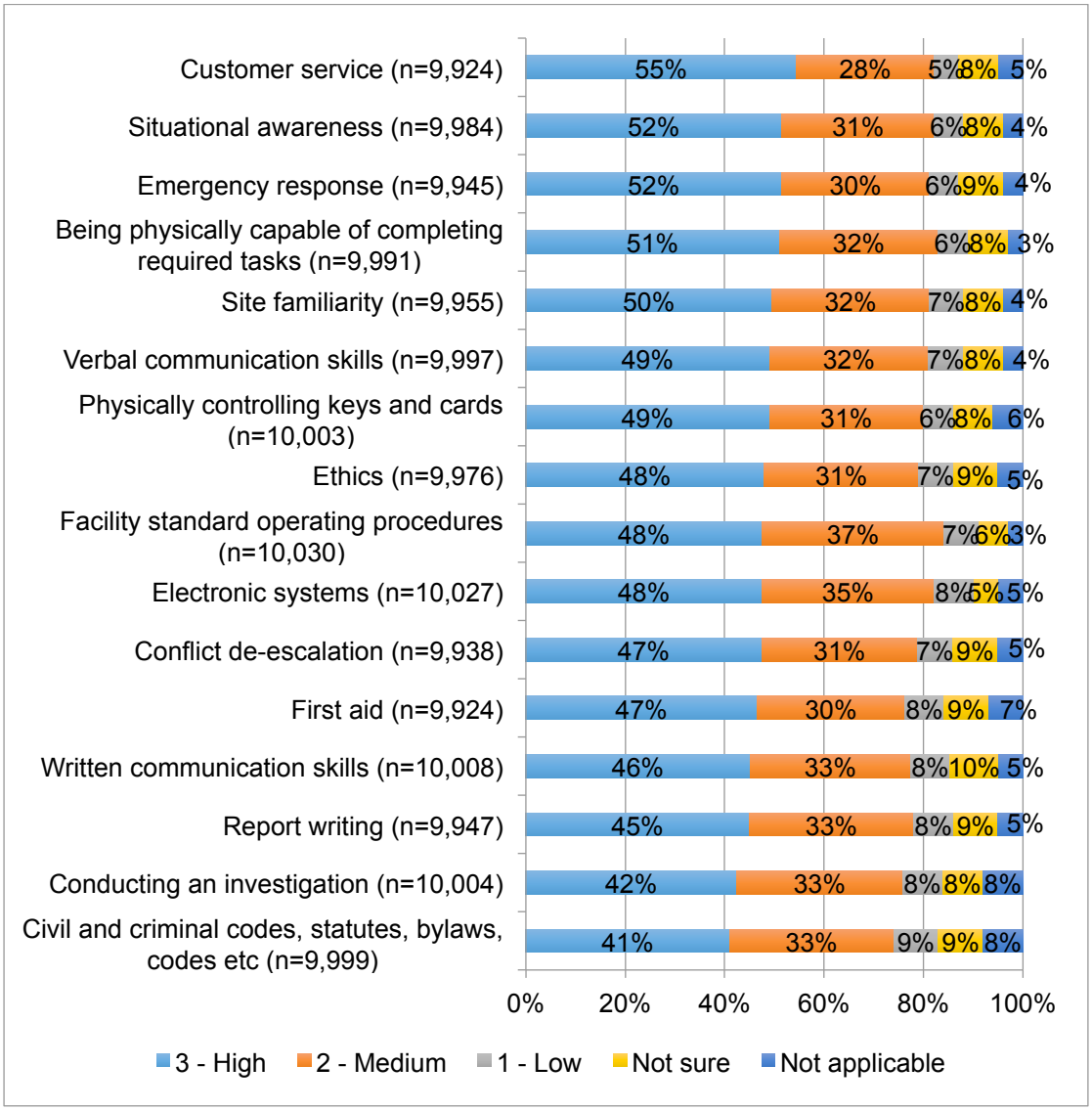
2.73 Focusing on the specific activities explored, those where the training was most commonly rated as 'high (effective)' were the same as those perceived to be carried out with high competence by colleagues (above); namely - *customer service* (55%), *situational awareness* (52%) and *emergency response* (52%).

2.74 At the other end of the scale, those where the training was least commonly rated as 'high (effective)' were the same as those least commonly perceived to be carried out with high competence by colleagues (above); namely - *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc* (41%), *conducting an investigation* (42%), and *report writing (45%)*.

2.75 The results are shown in Figure 10.

[121] 48% of in-house respondents indicated high competence, compared with 47% of self-employed respondents and 38% of contracted respondents.
[122] 44% of in-house and 42% of self-employed respondents indicated high competence, compared with 33% of contracted respondents.

Figure 10: Effectiveness of training received for activities



2.76 Further analysis showed that on the whole perceptions of training were fairly consistent regardless of the respondents' characteristics. Indeed, there were no notable variations by gender, age, level of education achieved, or the sector respondent works in.

2.77 The only clear trend, somewhat unsurprising, was that respondents that (generally) receive on-going training in their current role were more likely to view training as high/effective, than those who do not receive on-going training – this held true across all the tasks explored[123].

2.78 While the perception of the effectiveness of training received for these tasks was on the whole fairly consistent by length of time working in security, for a number of the tasks those that had been working in security for the longest time period – over 30 years responded

[123] The difference between those who receive on-going training and those who do not ranged from a minimum of 6 percentage points to a maximum of 23 percentage points. The average difference was 14 percentage points.

differently to the other durations – they were more likely to perceive training as high/effective for:

- *site familiarity*[124]
- *customer service*[125]
- *emergency response*[126]
- *situational awareness*[127]
- *physically controlling keys and card*[128]

2.79 By respondents' country the most consistent trend (but not for all activities) was respondents from Ireland and India rated training as high/effective at a proportion below the average. Also, respondents from Nigeria and Canada typically (but not for all activities) rated training as high/effective at a proportion above the average.

2.80 The most notable variations from the average include:

- Customer Service – 44% of India respondents and 46% of Ireland respondents viewed training as high/effective – compared with the average of 55%
- Site familiarity – 40% of India respondents, but 62% of UK respondents viewed training as high/effective – compared the average of 50%
- Verbal communication skills – 60% of Nigeria respondents viewed training as high/effective – above the average of 49%
- Physically controlling keys and cards – 41% of India respondents viewed competence as high, compared with the average of 49%
- Electronic systems - 38% of Ireland respondents and 39% of India respondents viewed training as high/effective, compared with the average of 48%
- Facility standard operating procedures – 40% of India respondents viewed training as high/effective, compared with the average of 48%
- Written communication skills – 56% of Nigeria respondents viewed training as high/effective, compared with the average of 46%
- Report writing – 56% of Nigeria respondents viewed training as high/effective, compared with the average of 45%

2.81 The most notable variations by role include:

- Both cash-in-transit/armoured car guards (41%) and door supervisor/bouncers (43%) less commonly perceived training in site familiarity as high/effective (compared with the average of 50%)[129]

[124] 69%, compared with the average of 50%.
[125] 64%, compared with the average of 55%.
[126] 63%, compared with the average of 52%.
[127] 61%, compared with the average of 52%.
[128] 60%, compared with the average of 49%.
[129] 41% of cash-in-transit/armoured car guards and 43% of door supervisor/bouncers perceived training as high/effective, compared with the average of 50%.

- Similarly, both cash-in-transit/armoured car guards (47%) and door supervisor/bouncers (47%) less commonly perceived training on customer service to be high/effective (compared with the average of 55%)
- Cash-in-transit/armoured car guards more commonly perceived training in first aid to be high/effective (56% compared with the average of 47%); and training in civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc to be high/effective (50% compared with the average of 41%).

2.82 The perception of the effectiveness of training received for these tasks was fairly consistent by respondents' type of employment, the only notable variation was for: *civil and criminal codes, statutes, bylaws, codes etc*, where in-house respondents were more likely to view training to be high/effective, than self-employed and contracted respondents[130]; and for *customer service*, where contracted respondents were more likely to view training to be high/effective, than in-house and self-employed respondents[131].

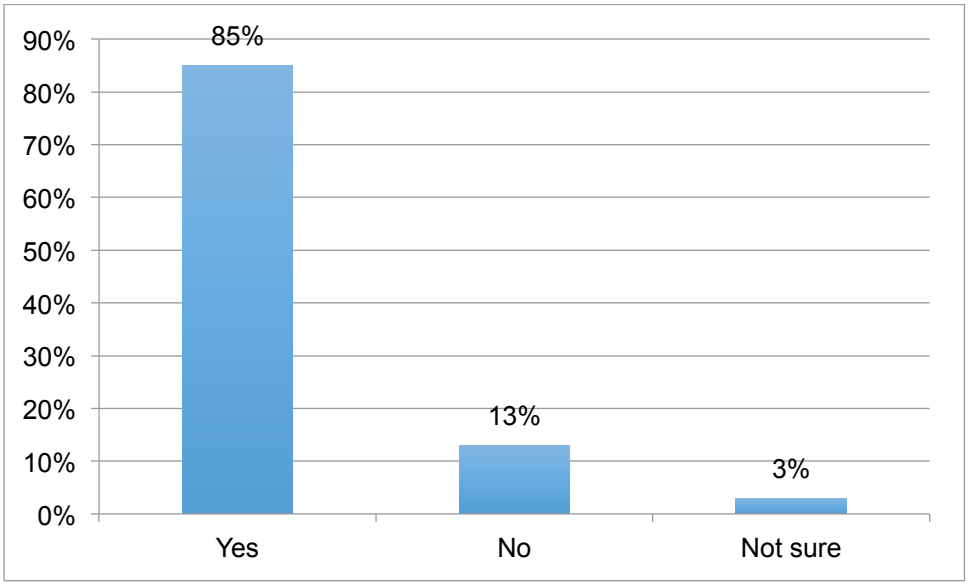
On-going Training

2.83 As Figure 11 shows the vast majority of respondents indicated that they do receive on-going training (85%). The question wording indicated that for the purposes of the survey both formal and informal training were included (informal training such as instruction from colleagues while working and/or through bulletins/updates).

2.84 Given the very wide definition used in relation to on-going training, it is however concerning that an eighth (13%) of respondents do not receive any on-going training at all.

[130] 47% of in-house respondents viewed training to be high/effective, compared with 42% of self-employed and 36% of contracted respondents.
[131] 59% of contracted respondents viewed training to be high/effective, compared with 53% of in-house and 49% of self-employed respondents.

Figure 11: Whether on-going training is received in current role (n=9,996)



2.85 Further analysis showed there was no notable difference between male and female respondents in the presence of on-going training. However, there were a number of ways in which the characteristics of respondents related to whether on-going training is received:

- Contracted respondents were less likely to receive on-going training than in-house and self-employed respondents[132].
- On-going training was reportedly lowest among respondents from Ireland and the UK[133]
- Older respondents were less likely to indicate they receive on-going training[134].
- Respondents that had not completed their education and that had completed high/secondary school education were slightly less likely to receive on-going training[135] than respondents with a trade/technical/vocational qualification or any type of degree[136].

2.86 Overall, the presence of on-going training was consistent across the different security officer/guard roles. Undercover store detective/ loss prevention (78%) and uniformed security officer guards (80%) were a little less likely to receive on-going training than other roles (on average 85%).

2.87 While the results were largely consistent by sector of respondent, those working in transportation and warehousing reported the lowest level of on-going training[137].

[132] 90% of in-house and 89% of self-employed respondents receive on-going training, compared with 79% of contracted respondents.
[133] 72% each, compared with the average of 85%.
[134] 73% of 66-75 year olds and 73% of 56-65 year olds indicated they receive on-going training, compared with the average of 85%.
[135] Each 81%
[136] Each 86% or 87%
[137] 72%, compared with the average of 85%.

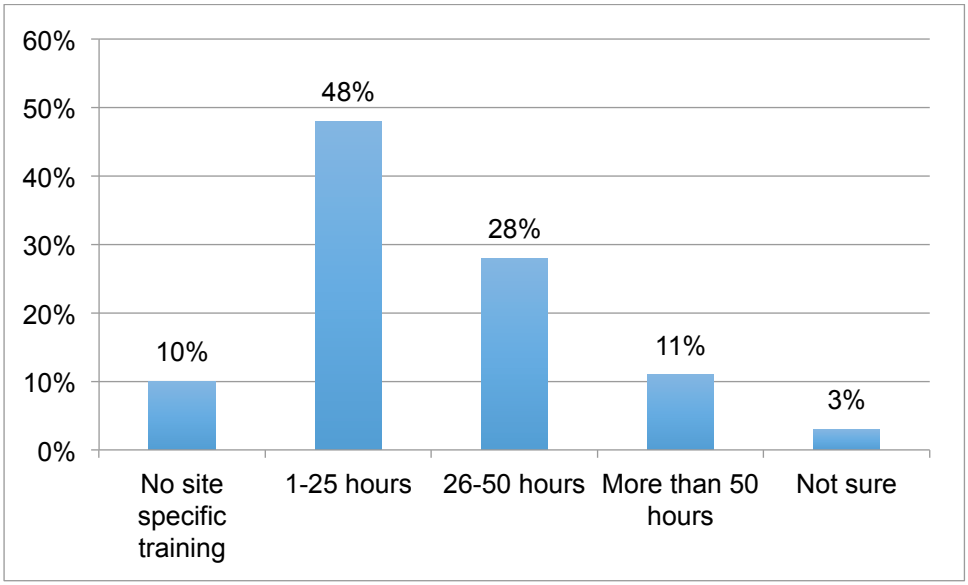
2.88 Those that had been working in security for over 30 years were the least likely to indicate they receive on-going training[138] although there was no overall trend associated with length of time working in security.

2.89 Respondents currently needing a licence for their security work were much more likely to indicate they receive on-going training (88%) than those who do not (69%).

Site-specific training

2.90 One in ten respondents (10%) indicated that they had received no site-specific training after being assigned to their current site. Close to half (48%) had received between 1 and 25 hours. The full results are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Length of site-specific training (n=10,027)



2.91 Further analysis showed some consistencies in responses - there was no notable difference between male and female respondents in the presence of site-specific training. There was no clear correlation by age groups of respondents. Similarly, there was no overall trend associated with length of time working in security.

2.92 While the results were largely consistent by sector of respondent, those working in supermarket/food services were the most likely to have not received site-specific training[139].

2.93 There were however a number of characteristics that related to the likelihood of receiving site-specific training:

[138] 72% of those working in security for over 30 years indicated they receive on-going training, compared with the average of 85%.
[139] 19%, compared with the average of 10%.

- Contracted respondents were more likely to have received no site-specific training than in-house and self-employed respondents[140].

- Respondents from the UK most commonly indicated they had not received site-specific training after being assigned to their current site[141].

- Respondents that had not completed their education were more likely to have had no site-specific training than those that had completed high/secondary school education or higher[142].

2.94 Undercover store detective/loss prevention were most likely to have had no site-specific training[143].

2.95 Respondents that did not receive on-going training were much less likely to have received site-specific training than those that do receive on-going training[144].

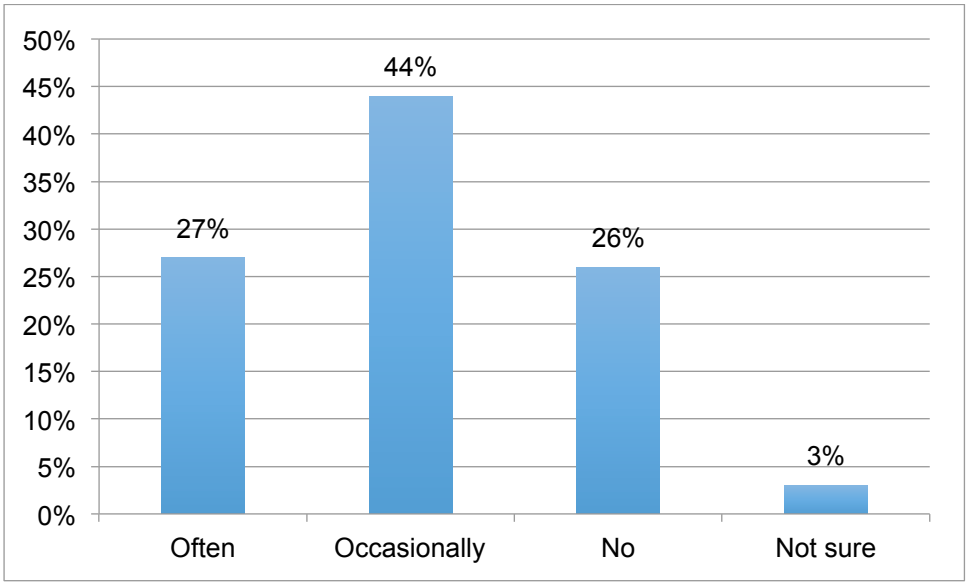
2.96 Respondents currently needing a licence for their security work were a little more likely to have received site-specific training than those who do not have a licence[145].

Non-security tasks

2.97 Respondents were asked whether they are required to undertake any non-security tasks as part of the role. More than a quarter (27%) did this 'often' and more than two fifths did this 'occasionally' (44%). The results are shown in Figure 13.

[140] 15% of contracted respondents received no site-specific training, compared with 6% of in-house respondents and 5% of self-employed respondents.
[141] 20% of UK respondents received no site-specific training, compared to the average of 10%.
[142] 20% of those who had not completed their education received no site-specific training, compared to the average of 10%.
[143] 22% of undercover store detective/loss prevention had received no site-specific training, compared to the average of 10%.
[144] 33% of respondents that did not receive on-going training received no site-specific training, compared with 6% of those that do receive on-going training.
[145] 9% of respondents currently needing a licence for their security work received no site-specific, compared with 15% of those who do not have a licence.

Figure 13: Frequency that non-security tasks are carried out (n=9,971)



2.98 This means that non-security tasks are less common than any of the security tasks explored (see paragraphs 2.29 to 2.37 above), but they are almost as common as basic investigations (32% of respondents undertook basic investigations 'often').

2.99 Further analysis showed that non-security tasks were more commonly a feature of the work of:

- respondents who had not completed their education, than those that had achieved high/secondary school education or higher; a greater proportion of those that had not completed their education indicated they undertake these tasks 'often'[146] and similarly, a lower proportion indicated they do not undertaken non-security tasks at all[147].

- respondents needing a licence than those who do not[148].

2.100 While male and female respondents undertook non-security tasks 'often' to about the same extent[149], female respondents were a little more likely than males to undertake non-security tasks occasionally[150] and similarly, a little less likely to not undertake non-security tasks at all[151]. In other words, non-security tasks are a feature of the work of female respondents a little more than male respondents.

[146] 46% of those who had not completed their education undertake non-security tasks 'often', compared with the average of 27%.
[147] 14% of those who had not completed their education do not undertake non-security tasks, compared with the average of 26%.
[148] 29% of respondents needing a licence undertake non-security tasks 'often' compared with 20% of those who do not need a licence.
[149] Often undertake non-security tasks: males – 27%, females – 28%
[150] Occasionally undertake non-security tasks: males – 43%, females – 48%
[151] Do not undertake non-security tasks: males – 28%, females – 21%

2.101 While respondents' undertook non-security tasks 'often' to about the same extent regardless of employment type[152], self-employed respondents were more likely to undertake them 'occasionally'[153] and contracted respondents were least likely to undertake them at all[154].

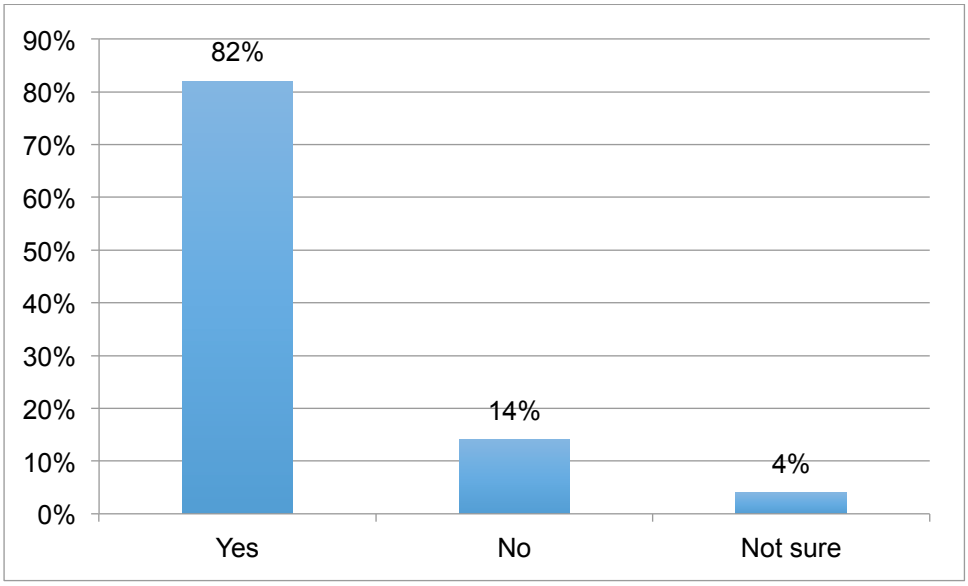
2.102 While those in the 66-75 year old age group were less likely to report undertaking non-security tasks than the other age groups[155], there was no clear trend between age and undertaking non-security tasks. Similarly, while those who had been working in security for over 30 years were less likely to report undertaking non-security tasks than the other durations[156], there was no clear association by length of time working in security.

2.103 The practice of undertaking non-security tasks was least common among respondents from Nigeria[157].

Licensing

2.104 The majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they need a licence to carry out their current work as a security officer/guard. This is shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Licence required for current security work (n=9,711)



[152] Non-security tasks undertaken 'often': 29% - contractor, 28% - in-house, 26% - self-employed.
[153] Non security tasks undertaken 'occasionally': self-employed – 54%, in-house – 46%, contracted – 38%.
[154] Non security tasks are not undertaken: contracted – 32%, in-house – 23%, self-employed – 18%.
[155] 38% of 66-75 year olds indicated they do not undertake non-security tasks, compared with the average of 26%.
[156] 35% of those working in security for over 30 years indicated they do not undertake non-security tasks, compared with the average of 26%.
[157] 15% of Nigeria respondents *often* undertook non-security tasks compared with the average of 27%.

2.105 Further analysis showed that the need for a licence for their work was consistent by gender, age, among the different security officer/guard roles, and by employment type (whether in-house, contracted or self-employed).

2.106 Licensing requirements are known to vary widely from country to country in terms of what roles and/or activities require a licence. That said, as a rough indicator, holding a licence for their current role was least common among respondents from Nigeria[158].

2.107 Notably, respondents that had been working in security for less than 12 months were less likely to indicate that they needed a licence for their role – but the responses for all other durations were consistent[159].

Perceptions of licensing

2.108 Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of licensing. Three fifths (60%) 'agreed' that *licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police for security personnel to do our jobs*. This view was more prevalent among respondents from Nigeria (71%) and a little less prevalent among respondents from Ireland (53%) and Canada (54%) compared with the average (60%).

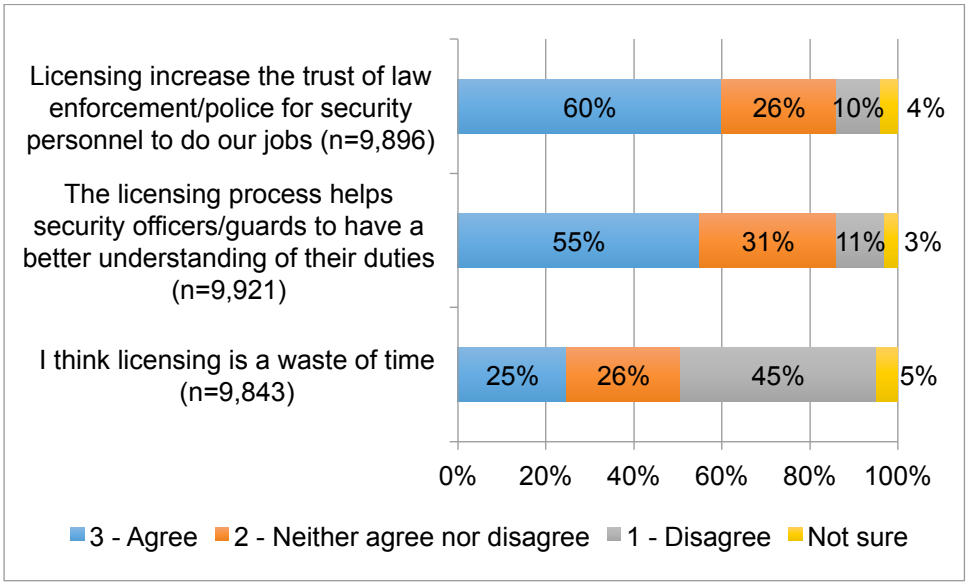
2.109 More than half (55%) 'agreed' that the process gives security officers/guards *a better understanding of their duties*. Agreement here was less prevalent among respondents from India (34%) and Ireland (43%).

2.110 A quarter or respondents (25%) 'agreed' that *licensing is a waste of time.* Disagreement with this statement was strongest among respondents from the UK (60%) and Nigeria (58%) compared with the average level of disagreement (45%).

2.111 Figure 15 provides a full breakdown of the results.

[158] 74% compared with the average of 82%
[159] 71% of respondents working in security for less than 12 months indicated they need a licence for their current role, compared with the average of 82%.

Figure 15: Perceptions of licensing



2.112 Further analysis showed that views on licensing were consistent among the different security officer/guard roles and regardless of how long respondents had been working in security.

2.113 There were however some differences in views.

2.114 Despite the proportion of male and female respondents holding a licence being consistent, overall female respondents seemed to be a little more sceptical about the value of licensing in respect of the aspects explored within the survey. Females were less likely to agree that the licensing process helps security officer/guards to have a better understanding of their duties[160]. Female respondents were a little less likely to agree that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police[161], and very slightly more likely to view licensing as a waste of time[162].

2.115 In a similar way, while the proportion of respondents holding a licence was consistent across employment type, overall self-employed respondents were more sceptical about the value of licensing. Self-employed respondents were less likely to agree that licensing helps security officer/guards to have a better understanding of their duties[163] and a little less likely to agree that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police[164]. They were more likely to view licensing as a waste of time[165].

[160] 47% of female respondents agreed, compared with 58% of male respondents.
[161] 56% of female respondents agreed, compared with 62% of male respondents.
[162] 27% of female respondents agreed, compared with 23% of male respondents.
[163] 43% of self-employed respondents agreed, compared with 57% of in-house respondents and 58% of contracted respondents.
[164] 55% of self-employed respondents agreed, compared with 61% of contracted respondents and 63% of in-house respondents.
[165] 35% of self-employed respondents agreed, compared with 27% of in-house respondents and 19% of contracted respondents.

2.116 There was also some variation in views of licensing by sector of respondent:

- Respondents in the emergency response sector and construction sector were the least likely to agree that the licensing process helps security officer/guards to have a better understanding of their duties[166]
- Respondents in the engineering/design sector were the least likely to agree that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement/police[167]
- Respondents in the emergency response sector and executive protection sector were most likely to agree that licensing is a waste of time[168]

2.117 Those holding a licence were more likely to agree the licensing process helps security officers/guards to have a better understanding of their duties than those that do not hold a licence[169]; and to agree that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement[170]. However, those that do have a licence were also a little more likely to agree that licensing is a waste of time than those that do not have a licence[171].

2.118 Respondents that receive on-going training were much more likely than those who do not, to agree both that licensing helps security officers/guards understand their duties and that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement; but equally likely to agree that licensing is a waste of time[172].

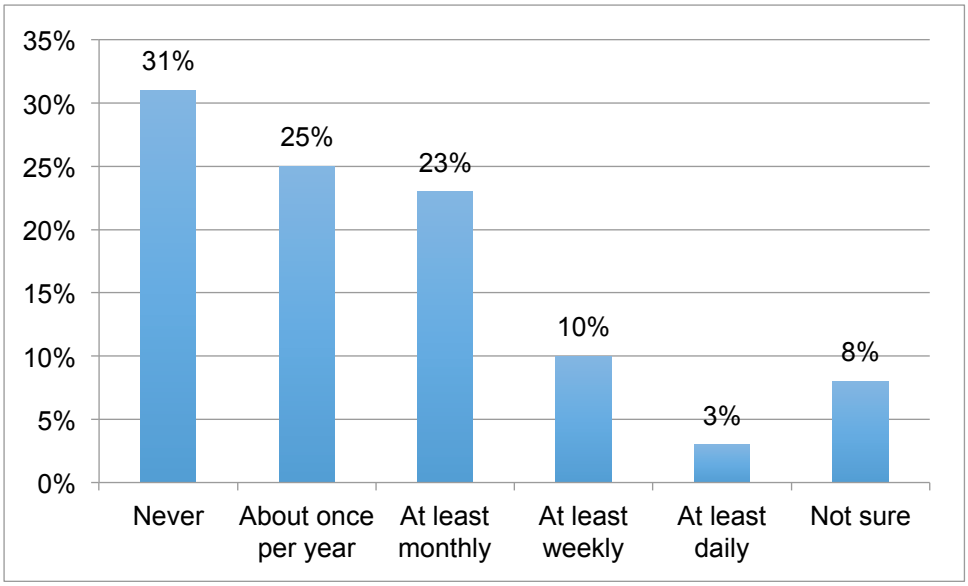
2.119 Those in the 66-75 age group and 56-66 age group were less likely to agree that licensing is a waste of time, than those in the other age groups[173].

[166] 43% of emergency response sector respondents and 44% of construction sector respondents agreed, compared with the average of 55%.
[167] 51% of engineering/design sector respondents agreed, compared with the average of 60%.
[168] 34% of emergency response sector respondents and 34% of executive protection sector respondents agreed, compared with the average of 25%.
[169] 57% of those holding a licence agreed, compared with 48% of those that do not hold a licence.
[170] 62% of those that have a licence, compared with 51% of those that do not.
[171] 25% of those that have a licence, compared with 20% of those that do not.
[172] 58% of those that receive on-going training agreed the licensing process helps security officers/guards to better understand their duties, compared with 41% of those that do not receive on-going training.
64% of those that receive on-going training agreed that licensing increases the trust of law enforcement, compared with 45% of those that do not receive on-going training.
25% of those that receive on-going training agreed that licensing is a waste of time, compared with 23% of those that do not receive on-going training.
[173] 14% of 66-75 year olds and 14% of 56-65 year olds agreed that licensing is a waste of time, compared with the average of 25%.

Use of force

2.120 Respondents were asked how often they use physical force as part of their work as a security officer/guard. Close to a third (31%) *never* use force; a quarter (25%) use force *about once per year*; and close to a quarter (23%) use force *about once a month*. *Weekly* (10%) and *daily* (3%) use was comparatively rare. This is displayed in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Frequency of use of physical force (n=9,952)



2.121 Further analysis showed a number of ways in which the use of force varies. Respondents that do (generally) receive on-going training were much more likely to use force than those that do not receive on-going training[174]. While the exact reasons for this are not known, it is possible that training for those likely to be in conflict situations is prioritised over those who are not.

2.122 The use of force was considerably less common among the UK respondents[175]. It was also much less common among those who do not need a licence for their security work than those that do[176].

2.123 There was considerable variation in the use of force among the different security officer/guard roles. Uniformed security officers/guards were the least likely to use it in their role[177], followed by uniformed security supervisors and CCTV operators/alarm respondents/

[174] 29% of those receiving on-going training indicated they never use it, compared with 48% of those that do not receive on-going training indicated they never use it.
[175] 56% reported this was *never,* compared with the average of 31%.
In addition to the survey, interviews were conducted with security officers/guards. A few UK interviewees noted that if they were to use force, their employer/client would not support them legally. This may be one possible reason why the use of force is lower in the UK, although there may also be other reasons.
[176] 48% of those who do not need a licence indicated they never use it, compared with 29% of those that need a licence indicated they never use it.
[177] 48% of uniformed security officers/guards said they never it.

surveillance[178]. Cash-in-transit/armoured car guards were the most likely to have used force[179], followed by door supervisor/bouncers[180] and undercover store detective/loss prevention[181].

2.124 There was also considerable variation in the use of force by employment type. Contracted respondents were much less likely to use it in their role than in-house respondents and self-employed respondents[182].

2.125 Similarly, there was also considerable variation in the use of force by sector. Respondents in the executive protection sector were the most likely to use force[183]; respondents in the transportation and warehousing sector were the least likely to use force[184].

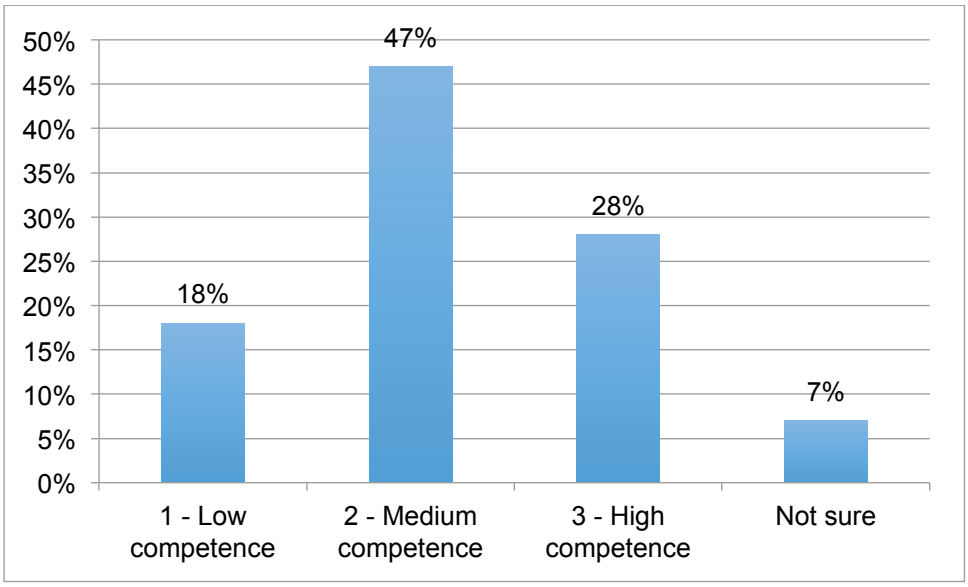
2.126 Respondents in the 66-75 year old age group and 56-65 year old group were less likely to use physical force than the other age groups[185]. Respondents that had been working in security for over 30 years were much less likely to use physical force than the other durations[186].

Perception of competence in the use of force

2.127 The majority of respondents thought that security officers/guards they know had 'medium' or 'high' competence in the knowledge required to use force (totalling 75%); although it was notable that a perception of 'medium' competence (47%) was more prevalent than a perception of 'high' competence (28%). Almost a fifth (18%) felt competence was 'low'. Again, it appears there is room for improvement in the level of competence to use force. Indeed, perception of competence is lower here than in comparison to the tasks explored above (where for all activities explored a greater proportion of respondents rated their colleagues as 'high' in competence than 'medium'). Figure 17 displays the full results.

[178] 25% of uniformed security supervisors and 24% of CCTV operators/alarm respondents/surveillance said they never use force.
[179] 9% of cash-in-transit/armoured car guards said they never use force.
[180] 17% of door supervisor/bouncers said they never use force.
[181] 18% of undercover store detective/loss prevention said they never use force.
[182] 49% of contracted respondents said they never use force, compared with 22% of in-house respondents and 13% of self-employed respondents.
[183] 13% said they never use force.
[184] 61% said they never use force.
[185] 64% of 66-75 year olds and 56% of 56-65 year olds never use force, compared with the average of 31%
[186] 57% never use force compared with the average of 31%.

Figure 17: Competence of security officers/guards in the knowledge required to use force (n=9,948)



2.128 Further analysis showed no notable differences in perception among different age groups and by length of time working in security. Female respondents were a little less likely to perceive colleagues as high/competent in the use of force than male respondents[187].

2.129 Among the different security officer/guard roles perception of colleagues' competence to use force was consistent, with the exception of cash-in-transit/armoured car guards who were more likely to perceive their colleagues to be high/competent in the use of force[188]. This may reflect the higher likelihood of cash-in-transit/armoured car guards using greater levels of force and even 'deadly' force, which necessitates a high level of competence.

2.130 Perception of competence in the use of force was lowest among respondents from the UK[189], however respondents from the UK also gave a notably high level of 'not sure' responses[190] suggesting that the relative lack of the use of force as flagged above may have impacted to some extent on their ability to give a definite response.

2.131 Those who do not receive on-going training were less likely to view colleagues as highly competent in the use of force than those who do receive on-going training[191].

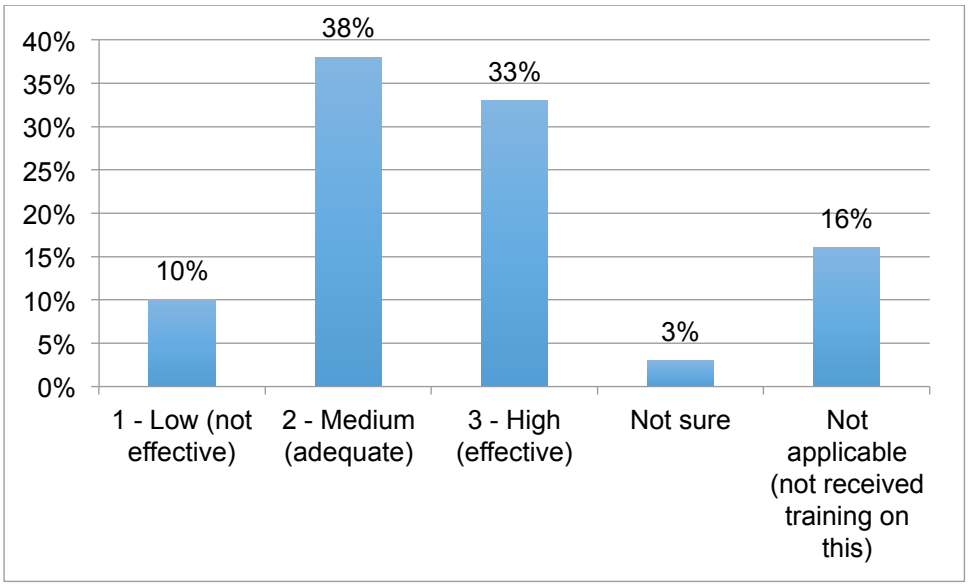
[187] 22% of female respondents indicated colleagues have high competence in the knowledge required to use force, compared with 29% of male respondents.
[188] 47%, compared with the average of 28%.
[189] 61% perceived this to be 'medium' or 'high', compared with the average total of 75%.
[190] 16%, compared with the average of 7%.
[191] 16% of those who do not receive on-going training viewed colleagues as highly competent in the use of force, compared with 30% of those who do receive on-going training.

Perception of training in the use of force

2.132 The training received in the use of force was most often (38%) perceived by respondents to be adequate ('medium'). A third (33%) perceived it to be effective ('high'). One in ten respondents (10%) thought it was not effective ('low').

2.133 The results are shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: How effective/ineffective training is, in the use of force (n=9,940)



2.134 Further analysis showed that cash-in-transit/armoured guards were much more likely to perceive the training received in the use of force to be high/effective than the other roles[192]. Again this may relate to their likelihood of using greater levels of force, which necessitates a higher standard of training.

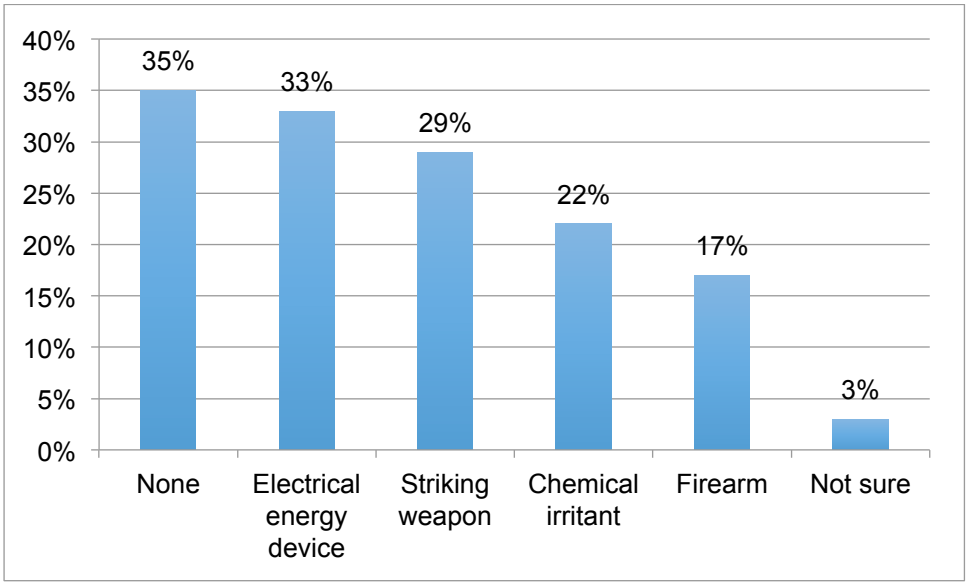
2.135 Those who (generally) receive on-going training were more likely to perceive the training received in the use of force to be high/effective than those who do not receive on-going training[193].

Carrying a weapon

2.136 Respondents were also asked whether they carried a weapon for their work. More than a third did not (35%). The weapon carried most commonly, by a third of respondents (33%), was an electrical energy device. Nearly as many carried a striking weapon (29%), and more than a fifth (22%) carried a chemical irritant. Less than a fifth (17%) carried a firearm. This is shown in Figure 19.

[192] 56%, compared with the average of 33%
[193] 35% of those that receive on-going training perceived training in the use of force to be high/effective, compared with 22% of those who do not receive on-going training.

Figure 19: Type of weapon used (n=9,858)



2.137 'Other' types of weapons mentioned by very small numbers of respondents included handcuffs, knife, torch, radio and forensic tagging spray.

Perception of training to use a weapon

2.138 Of those that carried a weapon in their role as a security officer/guard and provided an answer (n=6155), the vast majority (90%) thought that they had received *adequate* training in how and when to use their weapon(s); 6% said they had not; and 3% were not sure.

2.139 Further analysis showed that the perception of receiving adequate training was consistent across the different security officer/guard roles; across both male and female respondents; across different age groups; regardless of employment type, sector and length of time working in security.

2.140 Respondents holding a licence for their security work were much more likely to indicate they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s) than those without a licence[194].

2.141 Respondents that receive on-going training were much more likely to indicate they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s) than those who do not receive on-going training[195].

[194] 94% of respondents holding a licence indicated they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s), compared with 67% of those without a licence.
[195] 94% of respondents that receive on-going training indicated they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s), compared with 58% of those who do not receive on-going training.

Summary

2.142 The survey findings provide a useful reference point to help understand the prevalence of tasks, the competence of officers/guards and the effectiveness of the training received. They highlight the ways in which a number of professional characteristics (such as role, sector, employment type etc.) and personal characteristics (such as gender, age, education level etc.) impact on the tasks undertaken and perceptions of them. Overall, a key issue emerging is the apparent value of training – it was clear that security officers/guards view competence to be higher where training in those specific activities is more effective, and further receiving on-going training in their role also increases perceptions of competence and belief that training is effective.

2.143 Before considering the issues arising from the survey in more detail, the next section outlines the in-depth feedback collected via one-to-one interviews.

Section 3. Interview Findings

Frontline security officers: in their own words

> *… pay rates are low, contractors undercut each other and then the reputable companies get cut out and the guards then suffer.*
>
> *(Interviewee 25)*

> *What happens is the supervisor gives a talk and says sign here, it is about a paragraph, and we just sign it. That is it, that is all the training we get … We would love training, yes.*
>
> *(Interviewee 26)*

> *If we had training manuals that would help. The expectation is for us to learn everything yourself.*
>
> *(Interviewee 13)*

> *Trying to enforce any kind of rules on customers' sites is difficult because the clients you work for don't take much notice of the security advice you offer them.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *We only find out we have new rules to enforce when they decide to chastise us for not enforcing the rules we were not informed of.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *Some companies hire the cheapest level they can … they get 18-year-olds that spend all their time on their phones.*
>
> *(Interviewee 36)*

3.1 The research included one-to-one interviews with 42 security officers from six countries. Of these, 36 were males. The aim of the interviews was to explore the issues of job complexity, specifically factors that made the job difficult on the one hand and easier on the other; the factors that made training effective; and the key characteristics of a good security officer/guard. In addition to insights gleaned from interviews, we have included open comments made by respondents to the survey.

Factors that make the job difficult

3.2 The interviews provided the opportunity to discuss job complexity. We explored the factors interviewees felt made their role challenging and why. There were six overlapping factors in all: issues relating to procedures; the morale of workers and the challenge of recruiting and retaining sufficient quality staff; the contradictory expectations of the job (including non-security duties); poor management practices; the lack of support from law enforcement; and technology. We discuss each in turn and then add some comments about sexism and the use of force.

3.3 The first concerned procedures to guide work. Interviewees discussed situations where there were no established procedures, or where they were lacking in detail, or the information changed so often that it was difficult to keep up. This not only meant that they were sometimes unsure as to what was required of them, it also meant that this could leave themselves open to criticism for inadequate performance. In one university for example, the authorities had high expectation of what a security officer/guard should do, but did not reflect this in clear procedures, and there were other examples too. Some typical comments on this point included:

> *There are supposed to be site instructions as a reference, but they often are incomplete or too general to be useful.*
>
> *(Interviewee 21)*

> *It isn't that enforcing rules is difficult, it is that the customers of my site keep changing the rules and have terrible communication skills …*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *I would say… we do have a lot of changing SOPs that are not properly updated or some that are updated every week.*
>
> *(Interviewee 8)*

3.4 A corollary to this was poor adherence to procedures, sometimes from clients or senior staff, serving to undermine their work and sometimes leaving them without recourse to respond to security violations whilst being blamed for them. In some cases, security staff received mixed messages about the importance of security procedures evidenced by them not always being followed, somewhat undermining a key component of an effective security operation. Some comments here included:

> *The only thing is that the company* [the client] *don't follow their own procedures … they are senior staff … some don't follow procedures …*
>
> *(Interviewee 28)*

> *Interacting with the employees of the company I work for is difficult, because they don't always adhere to the rules themselves.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *Another issue is some of the high-profile staff invite people into their office without conducting proper due diligence and they give them access.*
>
> *(Interviewee 33)*

> *Enforcing the company rules, is … difficult at times, because you discover that those that made the law will be (the) first offender.*
>
> *(Interviewee 36)*

I have a noticed a few sites where customers are allowed by security managers to break the rules to keep them happy. It is very de-motivating.

(Interviewee 5)

3.5 A second issue was the low morale of frontline workers caused by systemic factors, such as low pay and poor working conditions. People reported that as such, workers were unmotivated and lacked commitment to the organisation, and there was a high turnover of staff. Retention of well trained and skilled staff was low, and it was hard to attract people to the roles. Some typical comments included:

'… the salary is too low and so we can't get people and we can't keep people and make them motivated.'

(Interviewee 28)

I feel it may be harder to keep a positive mindset with no raises and incentives.

(Survey respondent)

Security staff are treated poorly, which makes interacting with the general public and even some policing agencies more stressful than it should. We are seen as the lowest caste in society, even lower than janitorial ...

(Survey respondent)

There's a large turnover of staff, they take on people … and the quality of staff isn't going to change unless you put in the time and resources.

(Interviewee 35)

… personally, I am having to cover a lot. I have a large bank of CCTV with 48 external cameras and another 15 – 20 internal cameras, access control system with my own PC, fire alarm system, environmental systems, gas alarms systems and main facility alarm, so it can be fairly hectic.

(Interviewee 1)

Sometimes being overwhelmed with too many duties. Quite literally at some sites, there was so much to do, I lost track of time, you were that busy.

(Interviewee 14)

3.6 Many of the interviewees talked about how there was a culture of underbidding in the security sector, accepting contracts on low margins, which often results in adverse performance. Others pointed to the tendency to use contractors, who were not specialists in security work, for example who offered security but were primarily specialists in say cleaning or building maintenance. Some typical comments included:

A large number of security [staff] *are employed because companies bid low and the commercial value is the low bid, it is not about the key thing, which is the number of*

good quality staff available, and that does not do anyone any good.

(Interviewee 29)

The training is a big part, and the problem is the cost and also pay rates are low, contractors undercut each other and then the reputable companies get cut out and the guards then suffer.

(Interviewee 25)

3.7 Related to this, some of the interviewees talked about an ongoing low-level of interest in security at senior management levels, true of both suppliers and clients:

We are not seen as useful. In our building there is a lot of investment but not in the security staff.

(Interviewee 30)

Management does not see security as important. They still much prefer other staff. They just don't see security as being valuable.

(Interviewee 17)

… you're hired as security, but all the employer wants is a cleaner with (a) security badge. Security is a secondary thought.

(Survey respondent)

Clients don't care, security is for insurance purposes, security staff classed as lowest level of employment.

(Survey respondent)

Getting the client's employees to understand that we are enforcing their rules (these rules are in the employee handbook), not things we are making up.

(Survey respondent)

3.8 Some respondents also talked about how they felt unsupported both by clients and their company management:

Trying to enforce any kind of rules on customers' sites is difficult because the clients you work for don't take much notice of the security advice you offer them, the security company you are employed by tend to ALWAYS side with the client, not the security guard, the public also know we have VERY limited powers of arrest and don't respect us in any way. We are often classed as "Lowest of the Low" by the clients, the public & our Security bosses.

(Survey respondent)

You are regarded as the least person in the chain of command yet "the fall back to" should there be an infraction on site.

(Survey respondent)

3.9 Another potential consequence and a third factor concerned the competing demands and/or contradictory expectations from clients

about their work. This often appeared to stem from the lack of a clear remit about what the purpose of the security presence was, and frequently involved a conflict between a policing role on the one hand, versus a customer service role on the other:

> *Competing priorities, because I have multiple functions, along with time constraints and restrictions. If I'm not in uniform I can't do security guarding tasks – I need to be in uniform – that's the law. I also need to have my licence on me. Because of the role I'm in now, I'm rarely in uniform, but at the same time we need to be ready to go at short notice.*
>
> *(Interviewee 40)*

> *Customers want a police force type security, but customer focused. They can have a bit of each, but not all of both at the same time.*
>
> *(Interviewee 34)*

> *The job description does not match the duties. We have more of a policing role.*
>
> *(Interviewee 18)*

3.10 A few of the interviewees talked about a lack of general awareness with regards to the purpose of security resulting in different stakeholders viewing security personnel negatively, further impacting on their ability to carry out their role:

> *Dealing with the public is difficult. The response you get can be difficult, the recognition is not there, you are seen as more of a hindrance.*
>
> *(Interviewee 25)*

> *… the Head of Security asked me what I thought the staff in the company thought about us when we do an ID check, and he saw I hesitated and he said, 'let me guess, most don't know what you are doing it for'. 90% see you as a joke, 5% appreciate security and welcome you and help you to do your job well, and 5% are hostile and obstructive and especially young men.*
>
> *(Interviewee 30)*

> *The major obstacles to most of the tasks is the attitude and mindset of the public towards security when you are carrying out your daily routine.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

3.11 Some of the responses described how they felt people had a low opinion of security staff:

> *The public opinion of Security Officers is often quite low and is not helped by the standard of a number of (licensed) Security Officers I have had to work with.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

It saddens me that some people don't respect the security personnel.

(Survey respondent)

Often interacting with the public, staff, or students can be difficult. They have extremely low opinions of us and very little respect.

(Survey respondent)

3.12 Comments on the contradictory expectations emerged in response to a question we asked interviewees about any non-security roles that they were asked to perform, and how they felt about these duties especially in relation to their ability to carry out their core security function. The responses showed a mixed reaction. On the one hand some of the interviewees felt that there was value in performing non-security related roles, and talked about how it built client relationships, and how during recent times they had performed essential functions as a result of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, and that these were suitable tasks for their position. Some typical comments here included:

…if it's quiet enough, I will hand out a basket, or two or mingle with the customers. People love to chat … I am happy with the crowd, I am happy to help.

(Interviewee 11)

I think it helps client relations. I go above and beyond my tasks to keep the client happy. It adds value to what we do. We are not the bully boys.

(Interviewee 14)

If all security officers do is stand at the front door, then your mind wonders and there is no real meaning to the role, so the more variety you have the better.

(Interviewee 25)

Everything we do helps builds the profile, so there is nothing which we don't like we have to do … We do work to help organisations especially if they have an emergency, then if we can support management and the business, then we will take a look at it.

(Interviewee 22)

3.13 Against this though, there was expressed concern about engaging in non-security duties. Sometimes because this was trivial and at times, bordered on insulting:

… bring the newspaper from the gate to the manager's office, managers parking in the parking lot, and they expect guards to carry the managers bag or lunch.

(Interviewee 5)

Tasks are made difficult by other non-security work being added to the role by the client as a free labour i.e., moving furniture, setting up meeting rooms etc.

(Survey respondent)

3.14 There was general acknowledgement that non-security roles could get in the way of security duties, and this could have consequences:

> *Absolutely they were a distraction. How can I do my job when I am doing all these extra duties? My job is a foot soldier. It is my job to patrol and prevent criminal activity, not put-up posters and deliver mail. Someone could be stealing from a store when I am doing these tasks.*
>
> *(Interviewee 9)*

> *Certainly, the basics of that job were to monitor CCTV and ensure only individuals supposed to be on site were, and it was difficult when hoovering, you can't put your full attention in the task.*
>
> *(Interviewee 24)*

> *I see* [security] *moving backwards to a facilities role, with more multi-tasking not security tasks, and integrating it with online systems. It can take over the role and distract you.*
>
> *(Interviewee 35)*

3.15 Significantly, some of the interviewees identified how their non-security roles had the potential to put their colleagues or members of public at risk:

> *We do a lot of opening and closing of buildings, which technically speaking is not our role… They can be a distraction, yes. We have mobile jeeps here and I may be looking for some assistance and the other guy is on the 3rd floor of a building. It's quite a large site, so could take him up to five minutes to get to me, which is a long time if it's kicking off.*
>
> *(Interviewee 32)*

> *They can be a great distraction, say one doorman on a busy door, if he is trying to maintain the count for fire* [safety] *and maximum numbers, the venue capacity, then you have an incident often you have the choice of dealing with that or the count.*
>
> *(Interviewee 29)*

> *We have two dispatchers and if we are dealing with an issue after-hours, we have to answer the phone which takes us away from the situation.*
>
> *(Interviewee 8)*

3.16 One interviewee reported how a regulatory requirement for bouncers or door supervisors to have a first aid qualification had an unanticipated consequence, in that some venues were removing other medical support because of the door supervisors' training:

> *…* [the regulator has] *said all door supervisors must have a First Aid qualification, now we are seeing venues getting rid of the medical provider because they have*

security guards who are trained. The problem is you can't do security if you are dealing with first aid.

(Interviewee 29)

3.17 A fourth factor that security officers told us made the work difficult, concerned poor employment and management practices, which took a variety of forms. For example:

As a supervisor you can't discipline a guard for being late, it has to be a manager and yet you are accountable for guards under you, so it is difficult to know who you report to.

(Interviewee 21)

Covid changed the security officer role completely, where we had to enforce strict rules, which made it difficult with employees and patients. The issue was the management not having our back. When we had patients acting out and complaining they always supported the patient'.

(Interviewee 15)

3.18 Some of the respondents talked about the way in which good supervision or management impacted on their work role, for example:

Each situation is different. Each employer is different. These things can make a task easier or more difficult depending on the expectations and/or personality of the supervisor. Doing your duties with a confident and helpful supervisor is a lot easier no matter the task than one who's always looking for mistakes.

(Survey respondent)

3.19 Others commented on practices which were seen as leading to dangerous working conditions for both the guards and others at the site:

I got a broken nose by someone I arrested, and no manager came out to help me. They don't support me in what I do. This shop is normally a four-man shop, and I was working on my own. At the moment the cameras and radios are faulty.

(Interviewee 11)

Doing long patrol on each and every corner of the building and plus external patrol by yourself could be dangerous as there are lot of drunk people wandering around on nights looking for trouble.

(Survey respondent)

There has a been focus lately, in the university, there are a lot of students, there is a lot of support during the day, but overnight and weekends there is nobody so the only one ever present is security. The university is pushing mental health training onto security. They obviously don't want to have 24 hour a day mental health support as it is

> *so expensive, so they rely upon us. I have had a few students attempt to commit suicide. They push a lot onto us. It is an official stance. The thing is they understand, the job specs were originally written years ago, mental health has been around forever, students have killed themselves in the halls, especially during lockdown. The job description, when I look at it, there is nothing about mental health and there is nothing about how it drifts over the years.*
>
> *(Interviewee 18)*

> *We had a really bad freezing in* [name of state] *where I am at. Pipes froze, we were told to turn off all the valves. We did not know the difference between water and chemical valves. You are going to have to get maintenance out here to do that. Recently a compressor tank had an issue, 'almost like a bomb' leaking, pressure from a top valve and honestly, I did not know if it was safe. So chemical training should be more in-depth, especially where you are at. There are SOPs and ERPs here on my site and I am expected to read them and sign off on them that I understand them.*
>
> *(Interviewee 15)*

3.20 Others discussed instances where they had reported incidents, but management had not acted upon the information or taken responsibility, leading to frontline workers being blamed for a failure of management:

> *I was at the hospital as a security guard, and one of my officers was assaulted and nothing was done to the assaulter. That is when I put in my two weeks' notice.*
>
> *(Interviewee 15)*

3.21 The fifth factor was that the lack of support did not just relate to senior management and employers, it also referred to the police or civil authorities. It meant that security personnel were not seen as partners in helping to fight crime, their work was undermined as they could not follow through on dealing with some issues:

> *The police are useless. If you rang them for backup they'd show up after two hours.*
>
> *(Interviewee 36)*

> *Also, in a lot of cases maybe all cases, we don't get a response from the civil authorities, like the police, even if we make a citizen's arrest we are not backed up. The police over the years have seen a lot of low calibre and low paid people and they have had too many cases which have been thrown out they don't see the point in responding.*
>
> *(Interviewee 25)*

3.22 One interviewee feared that the lack of support can lead to injustice:

Sometimes when we call them, they don't respond or are very slow, and I think the main reason is that law enforcement thinks the situation is not important. Even if drugs are involved, which is serious, they may not come, it is that we are not important for them. It actually means that we don't treat Indians and non-Indians the same. If an Indian causes a problem and breaks the law, we can get them arrested by our own people, but non-Indians we rely on law enforcement who often don't turn up, so all we can do is give them a warning and release them.

(Interviewee 31)

3.23 Some interviewees talked about how this lack of support from police was particularly significant because of their inability to use force:

Dealing with and confronting individuals under the influence and/ or suffering from mental illness can be challenging to get these individuals to leave property and these situations are not always priority calls for police, resulting in delayed responses.

(Survey respondent)

3.24 A sixth factor related to shortcomings in technology which undermined the ability of frontline workers to carry out their role. Having to use outdated systems and the lack of investment in new systems featured prominently in the interviewees' accounts:

Technology here is 20 years old. Sometimes it was difficult for me to analyse images due to poor internet. Old and bad technology makes it difficult for me to do job.

(Interviewee 7)

Everything could be digitalised, everything is old style. I give as an example - keys. Many keys are not digital, and they are all managed by hand, so it would be nice if they were technical. The issue here is cost, that is why they don't change it, also the server can't handle it.

(Interviewee 31)

3.25 Even when technologies were introduced, they often could not be used effectively because of a lack of training, some people were overwhelmed by the systems they were meant to be engaging with:

… we are being overwhelmed with technology, the site supervisor was pulled out of the control room, and no support from the contract provider.

(Interviewee 1)

In the technical security, we may have software we are not familiar with, such as with CCTV software.

(Interviewee 6)

There also needs to be some upskilling. Some people don't have email or don't read their updates.

(Interviewee 32)

A note on sexism encountered while carrying out security work

3.26 As noted above six women were interviewed and between them they highlighted sexist behaviour they had encountered or observed which created a more difficult working environment. There were references to prevalent sexist attitudes, while others some talked about the under representation of women in the security sector generally:

There aren't many women in the security industry and those I come across tend to have reception-type duties. Women aren't represented fairly in senior positions.

(Interviewee 38)

3.27 Another gave accounts where they had been overlooked for promotion or specific jobs where male security personnel were favoured:

I have encountered it [sexism]*, mostly being passed over for promotion, usually for someone much younger and less experienced than I, because they were male. Always a young guy, like 18 or 19* [years old] *because they were bigger than me.*

(Interviewee 36)

There have been plenty of times where I've been in a situation working in a nightclub where the boss would always put guys before me because they thought as a woman, I couldn't do the job as well … A lot of bars here won't hire women in the first place because they want someone very well built who can drag people out … it's not really how it should be handled.

(Interviewee 36)

I've come up against sexism and homophobia in some shops and they say they don't have another shop for you, so they say put up with it or we'll fire you. So, I quit.

(Interviewee 36)

3.28 Some had even observed sexism as a result of cultural backgrounds:

I have seen women treated differently because of their gender – a real gender bias. It is definitely an issue showing favour to a male over a female. I've also seen women treated differently because of the supervisor's background when they come from a country where women are treated as second-class citizens. This sometimes affects how they treat their staff.

(Interviewee 37)

3.29 Sometimes sexist attitudes went beyond formal work situations. For example, two female interviewees spoke about how sexist gender roles had resulted in the assumption that they would clean up after their male

colleagues, especially when formal cleaning arrangements were not present (i.e. out of hours/weekends);

> *… clean up after other (male) security guards … they think I'll do it because I'm a woman. Though the main culprit has been sacked last week and I've told the others I'm not doing it anymore ... I've come up against sexism and homophobia in some shops and they say they don't have another shop for you, so they say put up with it or we'll fire you. So, I quit.*
>
> *(Interviewee 36)*

> *Yes, it varies – keeping the office clean. We have a cleaning company, but we are not always covered, especially at weekends when there's a skeleton staff on. If there are women, men expect them to do this.*
>
> *(Interviewee 37)*

A note on the use of force

3.30 Some of the respondents discussed the difficulties they face when considering the use of force. Many of these talked about how they were not permitted to use force, and that this meant they were unable to carry out some of their duties:

> *Making contact with certain individuals can be extremely dangerous. This is true when as Security Guards we cannot go "hands-on" with these individuals (unless it's for self-defence or first aid) because of legalities and client wishes.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *It is difficult due to we're a company of "hands off" in our field. In my job site. There are many times we need to be "hands on."*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

> *It's very difficult to physically handle any person in Canada while doing your duty, we cannot do this as per law. If we do this, we have to justify it in the court if they don't agree that the handling anybody is justified, then we have to face a fine or anything more serious, it may be a sentence or arrest.*
>
> *(Survey respondent)*

3.31 Others raised issues about the ambiguity of legislation regarding the right to use force, not helped by a lack of training in some instances:

> *Guards don't know how to use the right tactics - they just think that they can use force. People need to know what the law is and the company's policy on the use of force.*
>
> *(Interviewee 13)*

Security Officers don't receive enough training on use of force. Also, a lack of conflict de-escalation.

(Interviewee 16)

For that particular client, the difficulty, we had very extensive training in MOAB [Management of Aggressive Behavior]*, we had to learn state law in using force, it was the whole situation happens, the difficulty is the level of force: being properly trained to use the level of force appropriate for the situation. Not being provided enough initial training and continual training to do the job.*

(Interviewee 14)

There are steps to use of force. I have not been in the position to use force. I understand the theory. I also teach the legal use of force. The most difficult aspect of using force is maybe the threat and understanding how much force to use. It is discretion, it is very difficult in dealing with an attacker and how to respond. It is very difficult to tell others what to do.

(Interviewee 7)

I am comfortable in using force because I know the law. I have seen officers using force and they don't know how to use it. Part of my comfort is from my military background, but I know the laws. The knowledge I learned was on my own and not from training. There is very, very little that I have got from training.

(Interviewee 34)

Factors that make the role easier

3.32 Logically, comments on factors that made the role easier addressed similar issues to those discussed above that made the role difficult. Here are a range of quotes that reflect the views expressed:

When I have the support of my superiors and co-workers. When I have my team behind me, anything is possible.

(Interviewee 9)

It is having clear and concise expectations and policies and procedures laid out clearly by managers and directors so you know what to do, how to do it and how to get irregularities resolved should you need to.

(Interviewee 21)

You need people who have the desire to want to work well with others and want to be there and a genuine interest in security work, that makes things lot easier.

(Interviewee 30)

Technology, we have some good communication equipment, we call it Romeo, that means we can communicate with other security people, so no one is

isolated. I can also call my supervisor if I want to know something, and he is good, he has more knowledge than me.

(Interviewee 27)

Body-cams have made a huge difference. In nine out of ten instances a cam de-escalates a situation.

(Interviewee 32)

I am finding on Microsoft Teams with the client group and find it very easy to interact with them. I don't have to call anyone on the phone and just send an IM (instant message). I save five or ten minutes now. That has made my life easier. The email system, which I pushed for, made my life easier as we got added into it. They gave the supervisor the email addresses. Technology being linked also makes our job easier.

(Interviewee 1)

3.33 Perhaps though what stands out the most is the emphasis placed on good management structures, and at all levels. At senior levels in recognising the value of the work undertaken and supporting it, and at supervisory levels in guiding day-to-day practices. While other shortcomings can be managed, when there is weak management the work of frontline staff will always be compromised:

Supervisors vary, some are good some are not … the good ones work with you. The bad ones are hiding in the office.

(Interviewee 20)

Having a really good support structure for our team is phenomenal, every single project milestone is celebrated. The management team ensures that we have everything we need – tools to carry out our job – any training we need.

(Interviewee 40)

3.34 Two interviewees described the variety of different factors that contributed to their high job satisfaction levels, these included, good reporting structures, effective management, good feedback systems and communication with management, incentives for training, good progression routes, and personalised training paths:

Where I find it easy to do my job and beneficial is a reporting structure that is flawless. Everyone knows where to get information and senior management builds our team. There is flexibility to learn, provide feedback to management and management responds to our requests for specific training. Good communication with management and support from management to get additional training. We also get cash incentives upon completion of training. We have career progression routes; we develop our own content and have modular

training sections. We are developing our own content to support our learning and management has created an environment to learn more. There is also a clear progression to move ahead. We also have managers who take the time to talk to front line staff and train them one-on-one. We also have KPIs for our performance rating. We also have peer reviews to develop each employee. We have a combination of formal and informal training. We document our patrols and other activities and monitor employee actions through video surveillance. We conduct debriefs of situations and provide input and coaching to frontline employees to improve their performance. We have a tracking system to monitor employee performance. Staff are being promoted due to improvement.

(Interviewee 2)

Good management improves everything even in just getting breaks and not getting hypothermia or sunstroke. An occupational hazard is destroyed knees and destroyed backs from too much standing around, which is not good for the heart by the way. You need to move around not just stand there.

(Interviewee 29)

Perspectives on training

3.35 While training was invariably seen as valuable, there were four key overlapping factors that undermined its effectiveness, namely: organisations not taking training seriously; the training offered being unspecific and/or not related to their work; poor training content due to limits in the abilities of the course designers, the instructors and their training styles; and the general inadequacies of what was provided leading personnel to seek training from outside of work.

3.36 There is little doubt that respondents saw merit in training provided that it was relevant and delivered effectively:

Absolutely, extraordinarily, very useful. Being on different agency contracts you would forget other aspects of your job, like physical security.

(Interviewee 34)

Good training is beneficial in getting your job done, especially with the complexity of technology in the security job.

(Interviewee 5)

I'll always support training if it's worthwhile, but there's nothing worse than sitting for four hours in a room and getting nothing from it. I'd be the first to sign up to worthwhile training.

(Interviewee 32)

3.37 The first reason why all too often training was not seen as fit for purpose related to organisations not taking training seriously, in terms of recognising its significance and investing in it appropriately. Sometimes it amounted to no more than a more experienced colleague passing on requirements, often informally, or a sense that training was a tick box exercise rather than a genuine commitment to support frontline workers:

No formal training, more one on one with the supervisor who got the same himself when he started … It was seven years before I got trained, and then it was about control techniques without putting yourself under harm, as well as de-escalation skills, but it was not a pass or fail qualification, it was a case of them saying they had done the training.

(Interviewee 21)

I would say, the door supervisor course I did was a steppingstone. It was not as effective as it should be. It is given to a lot of people who are job seekers, quite a lot, 50% who don't want to be there. It is reflected by the trainers who are tired and exhausted, and it is not very effective.

(Interviewee 10)

In effect, I did not receive any training. I learned it all on the job. I learned through trial and error. I was on my own.

(Interviewee 11)

People these days tend to organise their own training. I've seen a trend over the last few years for people to undertake additional training themselves to upskill and can see the benefits of that for their career. This is probably both for their benefit and because they are not getting it through their companies.

(Interviewee 39)

3.38 There was some recognition here that the lack of attention to training was a reflection of the tight financial margins that companies operate under:

It is down to cost and probably the lack of experience of some companies, in the past it was better, things are tight now, low margins and tight turnover are common and that puts a constraint on training.

(Interviewee 25)

At work we sign forms to say we have done training, but we have not done any, it is all completely untrue. It is the way they do business, the cheapest is what counts.

(Interviewee 26)

3.39 A second (and overlapping) was that the training offered being unspecific and/or not related to their work, a case in point related to the limits of any training received from state licensing authorities. This type of training tends to cover general duties such as report writing, patrol techniques, communication tactics, and exposure to technology. What this lacks of course are details of the intricacies of how to work at a particular site which needs to be provided locally, but often was not, even though this kind of training was seen as essential:

The training was not effective. You do not use it. Because it was not practical and was not specific to my site.

(Interviewee 18)

I work as a relief officer on different sites … But we are not briefed beforehand so you could make a mistake or cause some harm before you begin. We need an information pack or 20 minutes instruction beforehand. Once I went an hour earlier to a site in my own time just to do a sort of handover, as I'd be working on my own.

(Interviewee 38)

The original 8-hour training was provided by a state certified instructor brought in by the contract guard company. I think the 8 hours is a joke. The course was delivered in 8 hours by PowerPoint. During the review the instructor read out the answers prior to the 10-question exam.

(Interviewee 13)

The instructor was telling me the answers to ensure I passed. To this day it is all the same. The tutors are there to pass people.

(Interviewee 19)

3.40 While many considered initial training to get a licence a starting point, in a specific question addressing potential shortcomings, many noted that it was insufficient, typically in being too cursory:

The problem is that training is not specific to the site. It is blanket training.

(Interviewee 9)

Typically, most focusses on law and it does not really specify what is required in roles … Some get a shock when they work because sectors and roles are different, and training does not account for that.

(Interviewee 24)

The licensing training is really, really general training and not site specific. There are so many different sites with

health care and schools, officers are not prepared. When they received the training, they struggled to learn the specific environment. Such as malls and they struggled to deal with situations. We wanted to provide them with various scenarios but could not … They need industry specific training.

(Interviewee 5)

3.41 Some pointed to required training being skipped:

As per the Federal Act, guards require 21 days of training. On record there is 21 days of training, but not in reality.

(Interviewee 3)

With [the regulator] *the execution of the training is the problem, there is a real problem. They say 20 people enter the room to sit the exam but 25 pass it … One provider says everyone passes with us, no one ever fails, now how can you say that? They were as corrupt as you come. The* [regulator] *is only interested in taking money.*

(Interviewee 30)

3.42 Unsurprisingly, different respondents highlighted specific areas that merited more attention in training programs. For example, on laws and how to apply them, on how to respond to a health emergency, on the use of IT and technologies, on social engineering approaches, mental health indicators, and on soft skills or people skills, to name but a few. However, one topic that merits special focus, because it was most frequently highlighted, was a lack of adequate training in the use of force, as well as skills for diffusing situations. Indeed, interviewees from a number of different countries noted concerns either because use of force was not allowed, (so it was ignored despite the reality that sometimes it was necessary including for self-protection), or because use of force was recognized as a requirement, but was inadequately addressed:

… there was little or nothing on restraint as you're not supposed to use it legally here … but everyone knows you can't work in night security without it.

(Interviewee 32)

… you don't learn anything about self-defense and there's only a certain amount of talking you can do to if they're drunk or intoxicated. You can pick it up as you go along, but some basic training would be useful.

(Interviewee 36)

We don't have weapons and so when we face someone who has, we have to run for ourselves. We need to know how to protect ourselves.

(Interviewee 27)

3.43 Some noted that as a consequence of poor formal instruction, training was acquired on the job. There were two important points made here.

Most felt that there was much to be gained from on-the-job training, that it provided a very effective way of understanding both the requirements and how they should be applied, some believing that this was the most effective way of learning the job. It also helps to keep abreast of changing requirements, not least given the variety of tasks that confront frontline workers and the element of unpredictability that inevitably surrounds the work:

> *Real life experience is so important – you can't beat it. I have a degree, but experience counts for a lot.*
>
> *(Interviewee 32)*

> *Most of what I know has been learned on the job. You can't prepare for a fire alarm unless you actually go through a fire alarm. You have to learn to deal with things as they arise.*
>
> *(Interviewee 37)*

> *Patrol training: you can tell a person all day long in a general training program how to conduct a patrol, but until they experience it … each and every property and patrol is different … For a company to deal with multiple sites, that is something that really needs to be taught at the site.*
>
> *(Interviewee 14)*

3.44 The problem though was when on-the-job training was a consequence of not being properly prepared in the first place.

> *My original training prepared me for about 20% of the job. The onsite training was another 10%. Everything else I learned on my own. It was two years before I started to get comfortable in doing my job.*
>
> *(Interviewee 1)*

> *This is a bone of contention on my site. Too often we get what they think we should have rather than asking what we think we need.*
>
> *(Interviewee 30)*

3.45 A third factor concerned the limited skills sets of the course designers and the instructors. Some felt that the trainers not being trained in methods of instruction was a limit. Sometimes there was lament about the style and delivery method of the training. On a general level, and perhaps inevitability, some preferred online as opposed to face-to-face and some vice versa. More fundamental though was the method of learning, which some felt was insufficiently attuned to the needs of frontline workers. Some interviewees gave specific examples:

> *Some of the training is not done in a meaningful way. It could be because they do not make the connection between the content and why you need to learn it. For me personally you can tell me to do something ten times but if you don't tell me why, I won't learn. I need to know why.*
>
> *(Interviewee 8)*

A lot of bland literature does not work for me. Just plain text on a white piece of paper. You have to engage with people.

(Interviewee 9)

What was missing was the practical element. In a lot of training there is no practical element.

(Interviewee 13)

I think more real-life scenarios, in that training. It was almost 'death by PowerPoint.'

(Interviewee 10)

… it was more we will show you a video and that was it.

(Interviewee 24)

By making it as real as possible and use lots of real scenarios … Lots of training is about checking a box. There is too much theory and not enough practice as well as a lack of why the trainee needs to know specific knowledge.

(Interviewee 2)

3.46 These points linked to a fourth concern, that the general inadequacies of what was provided led them to seeking input outside of work. A point of caution is needed here, sometimes undertaking courses outside of work, even at the individuals' own expense was seen as a positive and often part of a general work/career plan to improve as a professional and/or to generate new opportunities. Other times though, it was an indication of the lack of adequate support. Some examples of each view include:

Much is left up to the individual to go and get training and to do it in vacation time. They don't say look at these courses, if you do one and you are successful, we will help pay, or something like that.

(Interviewee 21)

I do lots of training on my own. Everything from basic first aid to technical stuff. I do this in my own time. I like it.

(Interviewee 20)

3.47 There is another point that merits attention. It is sometimes assumed that effective training is an unqualified good, but not necessarily so. One interviewee made this observation:

… you are recorded for your physical intervention training, and it was described to us that if you do anything outside this and there is an investigation then they can refer to the video to show that you were trained in a certain way. The problem is then that you are liable personally and not the training company or the [regulator]*, so that does not help at all. So, training can be detrimental.*

(Interviewee 24)

Improving training

3.48 Given the points made above, training could be improved by organisations recognising its importance and investing appropriately so that essential training is covered at work; interviewees noted that the level and quality of training provided reflected the degree of value employers attached to their work. There is a need to relate training to the needs of the job, which requires a focus on monitoring content for relevance, and crucially, training instructors, and ensuring that teaching styles are fit for purpose. More generally, providing incentives for people to complete education and training outside the workplace may be beneficial. This does not necessarily require financial investment, it could also include recognition within the company of the ongoing professional development being undertaken. Some advocated more on-going training; the need to test the effectiveness of what was taught as a route to making improvements; providing opportunities to learn from colleagues generally, and specifically when an incident had occurred; and key was ensuring that input was related to the work they were undertaking at the locales they worked.

3.49 Some of the interviewees highlighted the ways in which training could be made more impactful and effective:

> *I sat down with them all and told them and showed them what I wanted. I was transparent with them. I let them answer questions. I engaged with them. I take it one at a time and sit down with them … If you show a genuine interest, it really pays off.*
>
> *(Interviewee 9)*

> *The first aid and CPR training consisted of video, paper, and hands on. The hands-on was best as I learn by doing. Video is good, text is difficult as I have to read over it so many times.*
>
> *(Interviewee 15)*

> *I think when you can see how it relates to your work. Also, when the people who are doing the course have understood what we need. So, when it is relevant and when it is taught well.*
>
> *(Interviewee 30)*

> *The most helpful training, of course was the hands-on stuff, but more importantly training with people in the same work demographic. If you have a lot of people working together in similar situations and sites, so you have a lot of ideas of real-life situations: what about this?*
>
> *(Interviewee 2)*

3.50 A type of training that was often praised combined 'big picture' security management theory, coupled with practical knowledge provided to trainees to prepare them for their specific jobs:

> *The training I received from* [name of provider] *was very effective. It was mainly on security foundations and risk management and helped me understand things from a global point of view and not from a local. It helped me understand the risk profile and see the big picture. I become concerned about threats from inside the organisation and not from outside. Going through the training let me know that more training was better than less.*
>
> *(Interviewee 12)*

3.51 One trainer of two years, outlined how they approached training, including security awareness:

> *To help my students become successful, because security is very dynamic, I led my students to understand that and to help with current technology, provide internet and technology, I teach them emerging trends. I counselled them, I provided them with opportunities, I share with them IFPO and provide them with constant training. Books and on-the-job training. I provide practical training. I provide them with the philosophy of the job as well as the practical, such as how they are standing. I believe in both theory and practice.*
>
> *(Interviewee 7)*

Personal capabilities required for effective frontline work

3.52 Beyond the above issues, we asked the interviewees what they thought frontline workers needed to know in order to be able to perform their role effectively. There was a heavy focus on the personal capabilities of the individuals, and they reflect the 'personal effectiveness qualities' highlighted in Tier One of the Competency Model,[196] namely: interpersonal skills/teamwork; integrity; professionalism; initiative; adaptability/flexibility; dependability/reliability; and lifelong learning. Using the terminology of the interviewees, they identified seven key capabilities, namely: communication skills; social skills; showing self-awareness and being empathetic; to take care of themselves; to show initiative and be professionally curious; to be flexible; and being prepared to learn as change occurred. It is not a case of putting the emphasis on the individual to 'fit' these seven descriptions, but rather placing the emphasis on training people to have these capabilities.

3.53 A first skillset that was discussed involved being good at communicating with others:

> *I've always said that communication is 99% of the work – body language – the words we use. I'm 6' 7" but I've seen*

[196] Apollo Education Group/University of Phoenix (2015) *op cit*.

smaller guards de-escalate situations with guys bigger than me. You can't beat good communication.

(Interviewee 32)

3.54 Good communication was viewed as important in different areas, including to build team morale, and convey role-specific information effectively:

For the guarding team, communicating is key. We need to build some sense of belongness and they need know what to do. They must know how to communicate, how to use the radio what is the protocol. Also, on the phone if there is a suspicious person, how to communicate this.

(Interviewee 22)

3.55 More specifically, interviewees mentioned the need to be able to be assertive and lead:

By far the most important is probably leading and getting used to being assertive and understanding the difference between that and aggression.

(Interviewee 34)

3.56 A second related consideration was having good social skills – skills which go beyond mere communication and involve adopting a positive mentality. Interviewees described how frontline security officers needed to be able to build rapport quickly with people and to take a positive approach – avoiding an 'us versus them' stance with members of the public. Not only were social skills viewed as a key component of a customer service approach, but also key in preventing conflict from occurring or developing:

A high level of social skills, 90% of the time the job involves interacting with the public and building a rapport. You get more flies with honey than vinegar.

(Interviewee 24)

They also need good listening skills and how to de-escalate situations. They should be able to 'read the room' and therefore avoid getting caught up in situations and trouble.

(Interviewee 40)

You need people to understand that being pleasant and getting people to work with you means you working with them. Too often for security people it is an us and them and that is a problem. A positive mentality and being socially aware and polite to people because you enjoy it rather than because you have to do so.

(Interviewee 24)

3.57 A third set of characteristics involved having self-awareness and showing empathy. These were considered key to understanding how they were impacting on a situation and how to manage this:

> *They need to develop emotional intelligence. Who you are and self-awareness – how we are perceived by those who we encounter. If people's view is negative of us, this can have an impact. They should also have empathy and nurturing skills. This is not innate in us, and we need to be taught to develop these. People need to move more this way in the future.*
>
> *(Interviewee 40)*

3.58 Additionally, it was felt that managers needed to have the capacity to empathise with frontline security officers and understand the role they were undertaking, and to respond to their needs:

> *Motivation is required and supervisors and managers must understand them and what they face and how they do the job and solutions must be provided when they face difficulties.*
>
> *(Interviewee 22)*

> *Management only understands the job at the basic job spec and in terms of official training. Management, managers have no formal training in management themselves.*
>
> *(Interviewee 18)*

3.59 An interesting fourth characteristic was the need for frontline workers to look after themselves, in short, to practice good self-care in order to be effective at their role:

> *… they need to look after themselves. A lack of concentration is an impediment to doing the job well, when you are harassed and not thinking properly, usually a lack of sleep or food or hydration and standing in one place and lacking any physical stimulation.*
>
> *(Interviewee 29)*

> *You need to be assertive not aggressive, but the biggest thing is not putting yourself in danger.*
>
> *(Interviewee 36)*

3.60 Related to this, one interviewee talked about the need for frontline security officers to have good self-esteem and respect themselves in order to be able to be effective.

> *I feel strongly they have to respect themselves first otherwise they cannot perform well. It is not an easy job; they have a responsibility to protect a person or organization and they must believe they can do that. If they do, you can build on that.*
>
> *(Interviewee 22)*

3.61 A fifth factor was the need to show initiative, to be professionally curious, and to show enthusiasm (itself related to companies taking responsibility for fostering better employee morale):

Many years ago, I was asked what would you do if you found a door open and what questions would you ask yourself? Is it not just a matter of closing the door? How long has the door been open? Has that created a security threat? How do you know? And so on. So, you need to understand why you are here. It is beyond looking after your building. You are protecting the reputation of the company, but also the customer and you and your team.

(Interviewee 30)

3.62 Related to this a sixth factor was the ability to show humility and showing a willingness to listen. Interviewees talked about the importance of being able to recognise that they needed to be prepared to learn from each new experience and to be flexible and prepared to adapt to their situation:

Humility is number one – you don't know everything, and if you do, you might not be able to do everything. You need to learn about the history and culture. Take time to listen – actively listen – that's a huge part. Whether dealing with a person or a colleague you can use these transferable skills.

(Interviewee 40)

3.63 A seventh and related factor was always being prepared to learn more, indeed in being committed to continuous learning. To be clear this is not just about formal instruction, many of the comments focussed on the benefits of learning from peers:

Everything from developing our hard skills, soft skills, we are looking at developing the individual as a person who becomes a better employee. They need to have a comprehensive improvement program. It is holistic. We have team bonding outside of work. They have created an environment that allows people to be successful without cutting them down for not being perfect.

(Interviewee 2)

Networking events – on Zoom or something might be useful by the licensing body to meet up with others and share trends, knowledge, views … that kind of thing.

(Interviewee 44)

We need to get together and discuss issues.

(Interviewee 7)

3.64 As noted above, the key here is that these capabilities within personnel need to be encouraged and developed by employers, through support and training.

Overview

3.65 Many companies, it seems, do not practice good risk management, at least not according to the views of those frontline workers we interviewed. The lack of clear procedures is indicative of a failure to manage risks. Some companies/customers with high expectations did not match this with specific guidance to ensure high standards could be achieved. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there were sometimes contradictory expectations on the role which has inevitable consequences for the morale of workers. When those on the frontline see good colleagues leaving, recruitment as slow, and they are overburdened with the work that still needs to be undertaken while sometimes being on low wages, then adverse security becomes inevitable. Moreover, sexism sadly still occurs, and this too needs more attention and a more focused response.

3.66 Training of all types has a value, there was a strong voice of approval for good training, very strong. But what undermines effective delivery is organisations not taking training seriously, some saw it as a tick box exercise rather than being anything meaningful. Statutory training was sometimes seen as a basic and insufficient preparation to provide a good service, what was viewed as more damming is where it was not supported by on-site follow-up training or an input that directly related to the work they were doing. Courses which were not designed with the practitioner in mind led some to seek training outside work, sometimes because they wanted to develop themselves (which of course is an unqualified good) but sometimes because they felt vulnerable. Our sample suggested ways the training could be improved, both in response to the shortcomings identified, but also in offering incentives and making a commitment to viewing training as an ongoing concern, rather than one-off events in response to specific needs (albeit this matters too).

3.67 One other important point needs to be made about training. There is a tendency to see any training as an unqualified good, but as our interviewees explained, this is to misunderstand its role or the way it is sometimes operationalised. Getting the wrong training, or an insufficient amount of it, about how to work equipment is a case in point. However, in a different way we reported the concerns of one interviewee who noted how a regulatory requirement to have a first aid qualification had an unanticipated consequence in that some venues were removing other medical support, and another interviewee discussed a similar concern about covering mental health issues. When training is not done well, and sometimes our interviewees say it is not, it can lead to dangerous working conditions for both frontline workers and others at the site. This area needs more attention.

3.68 Another potentially dangerous area identified by our sample concerns the use of force. The legal position was often unclear on when it was appropriate to use force and especially on how much is acceptable.

When training in this area is not effective it makes a serious concern worse.

3.69 Interviewees pointed to some very poor, indeed, negligent practices. Some companies – clients and contractors were variously at fault - failed to grasp the connection between the value of security services and success of the company; as we allude to in the first section of this report, there is work to be undertaken here and it is important. For some, rather than seeing security as a strategy in mitigating risks, the way it is operationalized can create additional vulnerabilities, and potentially serious ones at that. That some interviewees discussed instances where they had reported incidents, but management had not acted upon the information or taken responsibility, both highlights and compounds the problem. It is brought about by poor management practices, at different levels which collectively play the most crucial role in undermining the effective delivery of frontline security.

3.70 We received an interesting response when we asked interviewees what they thought frontline workers needed to know in order to be able to perform their role effectively. A very important finding was that while the majority of interviewees did not see most of the tasks as overly complex, they did feel their job was made more difficult by the failure of employers to support the development of a range of personal competencies, and there were seven capabilities they identified specifically. Using the terminology of the interviewees, we have termed these: communication skills; social skills; showing self-awareness and being empathetic; to take care of themselves; to show initiative and be professionally curious; to be flexible; being prepared to learn as change occurred. Interestingly, and a theme we develop in Appendix One, these bear a close resemblance to the 'personal effectiveness' capabilities identified in Tier One of a highly influential competency model. These are capabilities that all workers are defined as needing, namely: interpersonal skills/teamwork; integrity; professionalism; initiative; adaptability/flexibility; dependability/reliability; and lifelong learning.

3.71 In the final section we seek to interpret these findings in the light of all the findings in this report. It is to that we now turn.

Section 4. Discussion

4.1 Often employers (clients and suppliers) do not gear themselves up to maximise the value of those they employ on the frontline and as we have found sometimes show a poor approach to risk management. It was encouraging that by and large respondents viewed their colleagues as competent, albeit there was clear room for improvement. The use of force is one such example, where 18% viewed colleagues' competence as 'low' and females in particular were more likely to have this view. Overall though, the security tasks commonly undertaken were not considered difficult (particularly by younger participants in the research). That said a variety of factors undermined their ability to offer the best possible service. For example a lack of clear procedures, confusion about job roles, legal uncertainty about the use of force all featured in discussions. In this section, further consideration is given to the key issues highlighted by the research which are significant in developing our understanding of the actions needed to enable security officers/guards to carry out their tasks more effectively.

The findings in perspective

4.2 First, it was evident that there are a variety of ways in which the tasks undertaken by security officers/guards relate to the characteristics of the respondent. Findings by sector for example highlight that there is a clear link between the situation or context a security officer/guard works in, and the tasks associated. Some factors (for example gender and age) would merit further research to understand how the characteristics of respondents may be affecting how/what tasks are allocated to them and to better understand how findings can be best used to optimize performance.

4.3 Second, the finding's may help with future recruitments initiatives, clearly identified as a challenge by our respondents. There are many points that could be made here, but for example, emphasising the potential to 'serve the public' is likely to be appealing, while recognising that the hours required to be worked will impact on the type of person likely and able to apply for roles may guide the types of recruitment campaigns likely to be most successful. Low pay was highlighted as a significant issue by some, but not all, and it is important to note, and to highlight, that frontline security work does not necessarily mean poor pay, indeed it can compare favourably.

4.4 Third, the role of licensing was noteworthy. Respondents were generally positive that it enhances understanding of their role and increases the trust of law enforcement. However, it was not without criticism as a quarter of respondents indicated they thought it to be a waste of time (expanding on this point - interviewees pointed to poor practices from the scope of regulation being too narrow and/or what was required not being enforced). Nonetheless, respondents holding a

licence were much more likely to indicate they receive on-going training than those who do not. Licence holders were also more likely to indicate they had received adequate training to use their weapon(s) than those who do not hold a licence. It would appear licensing has the potential to create a structure more likely to lead to appropriate training and ultimately to develop competence, but this is not a given and needs more research; certainly, it would seem important that the licensing process itself is considered to be a foundation on which employers should look to build.

4.5 Fourth, care is needed over the inclusion of 'non-security' tasks. These were less often a part of the role than any of the security tasks explored, but they were only a little less common among respondents than undertaking 'basic investigations', and a greater feature among some types of respondents. In other words, while not a main 'task' they represent a notable minority of the work time of security officers/guards; only a quarter of respondents did not undertake 'non-security' tasks at all. Interviewees highlighted how on the one hand non-security tasks increased and exacerbated the competing demands of their role, and on the other provided variety and enabled them to offer more value to employers/clients. The research points towards the importance of carefully considering whether (and/or when) non-security tasks are conducive or detrimental to existing security officer/guard responsibilities.

4.6 A fifth key factor is training. While perceptions of the competence of colleagues and the effectiveness of training received are generally speaking - fair, the findings leave ample scope for improvmeent. Indeed, while relatively rare, some respondents receive no on-going training at all in their role and some received no site-specific training when they were allocated to their site to ensure their knowledge and understanding was tailored to the specific context. There remains considerable room for improvement if we assume that our collective goal should be to develop a workforce that is highly competent in the core activities they undertake, supported by highly effective training.

4.7 Certainly, when done well training was widely valued. It clearly helps new hires prepare for the job and is seen as a valuable tool in improving work as people progress. Activities that respondents perceived colleagues to be competent in matched those where they perceived the training to be effective – the converse was also true. In short, and perhaps unsurprisingly, officers/guards are more competent at things they are trained well in. Further, those that said they receive on-going training in their role more commonly considered colleagues to be competent and more commonly perceived the training received in the activities they undertake to be high. In other words, on-going training – not just initial training – plays an important role. Overall, training is valued to such an extent that many of our interviewees had themselves or knew of others that had pursued training on their own – sometimes at their own expense - to improve their competencies.

4.8 The training that was received by our sample was varied covering many different bases. Theoretical/foundational training may include an overview of the security sector, risk management principles, occupational health and safety & physical security. Site specific training may involve physically learning the site by walking around, understanding what is expected of each position, and interacting with site users. Task specific training may involve specific duties such as control room training, use of force, access control and writing reports. For frontline workers, refresher training takes many forms and involves building on knowledge and skills already acquired and learning new ones. Non-security related training was varied and clearly needs to be targeted to local needs.

4.9 Training delivery too is undertaken in different ways. Classroom training involves workers coming together in the physical environment. On-the-job training can typically take two forms. It is sometimes a derogatory term used to describe no training at all as officers/guards learn as they work, or it may involve supportive instruction and guidance as people engage with different duties. One-on-one mentorship (typically seen as a general term where more experienced personnel worked with trainees in a one-on-one relationship) was seen as a valuable method of transferring knowledge from experienced personal to newly hired staff and was much valued. Many officers/guards are competent, hard-working and dedicated to their sites and often feel undervalued. As such, they know the difference between good and poor training. They were able to articulate the difference in both content and delivery; easily distinguishing the competent from the incompetent. Trainees want to learn, and they want to do a good job.

4.10 This overlaps a sixth key factor and that is recognising what is key about competency. It will be recalled that for all the activities explored in the survey a greater proportion of respondents rated their colleagues as ‘high’ in competence as opposed to ‘medium’, while across 15 different job activities explored between 6% and 13% of respondents rated their colleagues as ‘low’ in each activity. Similarly, the majority (between 73 & 81%) of interviewees ranked their duties as either easy or average in complexity to undertake. However, what made their jobs difficult was the lack of what we have discussed as Tier 1 competencies amongst co-workers (see Appendix). These competencies include interpersonal skills & teamwork, integrity, professionalism, initiative, adaptability & flexibility, dependability and reliability and lifelong learning. In short, frontline workers most often see their co-workers as reasonably competent, and the key factors in determining that are less issues relating to the complexity of the tasks and much more the personal competencies of those that are engaged; recruiting the right people is key and including personal skillset development as part of role preparation is vital.

4.11 Seventh, and arguably the most important determinant of whether security officer/guards will deliver a professional service is the quality of management (at all levels). Being aware what the role of security is and how it helps an organisation achieve its objectives; focussing security operations on effective delivery; supporting and engaging stakeholders; providing clear and supportive work and governance structures; generating a positive and security conscious culture across all workers and all levels of management (and not allowing sexist practices for example); and guiding workers and remunerating people appropriately, are the types of approaches that will be familiar references in textbook guides to good security management. The point from this research is that when any of these are faulty, they have a direct impact on the quality of work of those on the frontline, who are the most visible and immediate physical response in a crisis. There is no easy win here, if security is purchased on a low-price ticket, and/or its remit is unclear, and/or it is not focussed appropriately, and/or if any levels or areas of security management are not fit for purpose, the work of the security officer/guard is *always* likely to be compromised.

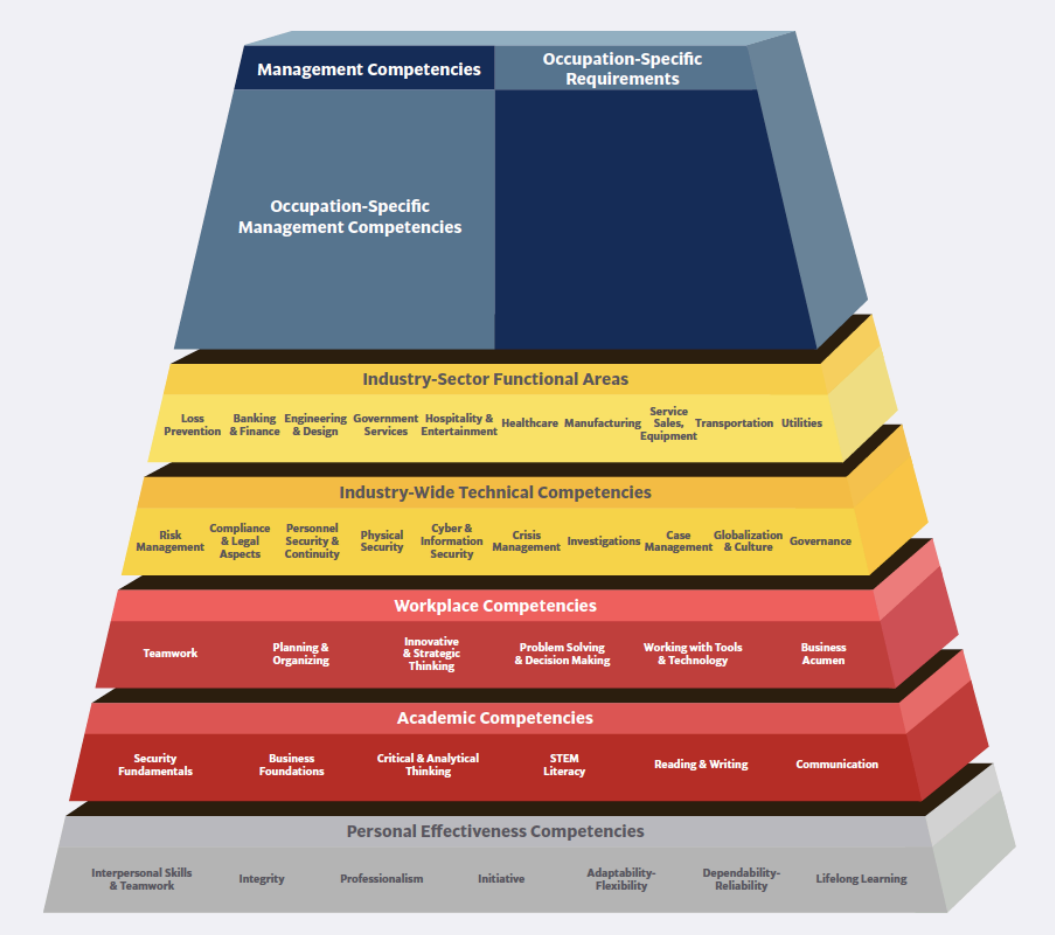
4.12 Frontline security workers are key, and often considered to be 'essential' workers. The number of them across countries, industries and organisations is testament to their importance. So too the fact that in most domains their work is licenced, albeit according to our sample this often appears to miss the mark in terms of optimising performance. Indeed, what we learn is that there is so much more we can do to improve the contribution of security officers/guards and crucially the perception of their work. Good management, effective training, appropriate awareness of key competencies are all key. It is not that workers are unhappy, mostly they are not, but if we pay attention to what frontline workers say there is so much more that could be achieved affording benefits for workers, their employers of course, but also, crucially, law enforcement and the general public.

Appendix 1. Developing a competency model for security officers

Background

There are a number of reference points for assessing competencies,[197] many of which are based on the General Competency Model developed by the US Department of Labor. One of these is the Competency Model for Enterprise Security and Cybersecurity produced by ASIS International working with Apollo Education Group and the University of Phoenix.[198] (See Figure 20). The competencies developed here are based on this model.

Figure 20: Enterprise Security Competency Model



This model can be used by various industry sectors to develop industry-specific models to aid employers and educators in writing job descriptions and developing curriculum; evaluating job candidates and hiring employees; and measuring employee performance.

[197] As discussed in Section One of this report, but to re-iterate, a *competency* is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform what may be termed 'critical work functions' or tasks in a defined work setting.
[198] Apollo Education Group/University of Phoenix (2015) *op. cit.*

The model consists of nine building blocks or tiers which detail various competencies that become more specific and specialised towards the top of the pyramid. At the base, Tiers 1-3 represent the Foundational Competencies, applying to a large number of occupations and industries; Tiers 4 and 5 are the Industry Related Competencies; and Tiers 6-9 are the Occupation Related Competencies (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: General Competency Model Tiers

Occupation Related Competencies

Tier 9	Management Competencies
Tier 8	Occupation-Specific Requirements
Tier 7	Occupation-Specific Technical Competencies
Tier 6	Occupation-Specific Knowledge Competencies

Industry Related Competencies

Tier 5	Industry-Sector Technical Competencies
Tier 4	Industry-Wide Technical Competencies

Foundational Competencies

Tier 3	Workplace Competencies
Tier 2	Academic Competencies
Tier 1	Personal Effectiveness Competencies

How these competencies relate to the security sector

One of the key findings from the research was that the majority of those we spoke to did not see most of their tasks as overly complex. What did make their jobs more difficult however, was the absence of basic Tier 1 competencies in their co-workers. Tier 1 competencies include: interpersonal skills and teamwork, integrity, professionalism, initiative, adaptability and flexibility, dependability and reliability, and lifelong learning. Organisations, therefore, may wish to identify through detailed job descriptions:

- the specific tasks that security officers will engage in, and
- the percentage of each competency that is required for the successful completion of the role.

This enterprise security model, while meant to capture the competencies required for all individuals to work in the security industry, is focused on those operating as managers and above. Security Officer competencies at Tier 4 are not identified. However, it served as a foundation for the development of Security Officer Tier 4 Industry-Wide Technical Competencies and the expansion of Tier 5 Industry-Sector Technical Competencies.

Therefore, the lack of security officer Tier 4 Industry Technical Competencies became the focus of our attention. This was aided by research previously

undertaken by Kitteringham[199] which identified a number of tasks for this level. These tasks can be seen in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Industry-Wide Technical competencies developed for security officers

1. Control Access	**2.** Conduct Basic Investigations	**3.** Enforce Rules	**4.** Undertake Physical & Electronic Patrol	**5.** Respond to Alarms & Emergency Situations	**6.** Provide Customer Service	**7.** Undertake Special Assignments & Requests

In addition, it was recognised that the Tier 5 Industry-Sector Technical Competencies were missing in a number of areas. As seen above in Figure 20, there were only ten sectors of the economy identified in the original model, so additional research was undertaken to identify any remaining sectors. Twelve additional sectors can be seen in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Industry-Sector Functional Areas

17. Resource Extraction	**18.** Executive Protection	**19.** Emergency Response	**20.** Contract Security Guard	**21.** Armoured Car Service	**22.** Humanitarian
11. Property Management	**12.** Construction	**13.** College & University	**14.** Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing	**15.** Religious Institutions, House of Worship	**16.** Technology
5. Hospitality & Entertainment	**6.** Health Care	**7.** Manufacturing	**8.** Services, Sales Equipment	**9.** Transportation & Warehousing	**10.** Utilities
	1. Loss Prevention	**2.** Banking & Financial Services	**3.** Engineering & Design	**4.** Government Services	

Proposed training areas for security officers for industry-wide technical competencies

As a result of research and survey feedback the list of seven industry-wide technical competencies is presented along with a detailed breakdown of suggested areas of training content development which may be required to prepare security officers for general work.

1. Controlling access (training consists of gaining knowledge in the following areas)
    - the demonstrated ability to learn, understand and apply access control rules and regulations for the site including requesting identification from personnel visiting the site, granting, or denying access and maintaining keyholder responsibilities for the site.

[199] Kitteringham, G. (2017). *Security Practitioners Perspectives of the Alberta Basic Security Training Programme.* Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

- Ability to verify proof of authorisation consists of ability to use a related computer system, physical lists, verifying identification, following specific process for the site and document processes and maintain visitor records.
- Articulate the access control process consists of explaining the process to those wishing to access the site, explain the rationale to those denied access and explaining the need to track/control/prevent access based on organisational needs.
- Operate relevant equipment including x-ray and metal detectors, access control software, vehicle and pedestrian gates, a variety of doors, turnstiles, and other access points including loading docks and parking structures.

2. Conducting basic investigations – training consists of gaining knowledge in the following areas:
    - Conduct a field investigation including gathering all pertinent information
    - Writing reports as per the site including maintaining personal notebook
    - Collecting information for a variety of site record purposes.
    - Managing/controlling/protecting a crime scene.

3. Enforcing rules – training consists of gaining knowledge in the following areas:
    - Learning site rules.
    - Security awareness
    - Being able to articulate those site rules.
    - Learning and practicing verbal and physical conflict de-escalation skills including use of force
    - Enforcing rules verbally or physically
    - Civil and criminal parameters of operating as a security officer
    - Critical thinking skills
    - Situational awareness
    - Where appropriate, using weapons for defensive and offensive actions.

4. Undertaking physical & electronic patrols – training consists of gaining knowledge in the following areas:
    - The geography of the physical area under patrol through physical presence. This means that trainees require extensive exposure through physical patrols to their assigned site.
    - Conducting periodic inspections of the site.
    - Operating equipment used for patrolling either physically or electronically including vehicles, bicycles, access control system, video surveillance, duress alarms, two-way radios, and other site-specific equipment.
    - Assessing the various threats facing the specific site.
    - Directing others to specific areas through verbal or electronic means

- Tracking the activity of others including other security personnel, emergency responders, and site users.

5. Responding to alarms and emergency situations – training consists of gaining knowledge in the following areas:
    - Specific alarm response (burglar, robbery, motion, fire, duress, etc.).
    - Responding to all emergencies specific to the site.
    - Responding to escalating situations.
    - Liaising with other security personnel, site users, and emergency responders during the event.

6. Providing customer service (this competency is embedded in the other duties as well as a stand-alone duty)

7. Undertaking special assignments as requested those identified in this research and can include:
    - Door supervisors/bouncers/doormen/women who typically work at licenced premises. Duties may include:
        - Controlling access
        - Conducting basic investigations
        - Enforcing rules
        - Undertaking physical rules
        - Responding to emergency situations and
        - Providing customer service.
    - CCTV Operators/Central Alarm Respondents. Duties may include:
        - Undertaking physical or electronic patrols
        - Responding to emergency situations
        - Providing customer service
    - Cash in Transit / Armoured Car Guards. Duties may include:
        - Driving a vehicle along established routes
        - Guarding valuables
        - Issuing and receiving receipts from customers
        - Enforce rules
        - Respond to emergency situations
    - Close protection specialists. Duties may include:
        - Controlling access
        - Conducting basic investigations
        - Enforcing rules
        - Undertaking physical or electronic patrols
        - Responding to emergency situations
        - Providing customer service
    - Store Detectives/Loss Prevention Officer/Investigator. Duties may include:
        - Controlling access
        - Conducting basic investigations
        - Enforcing rules
        - Undertaking physical/electronic patrols
        - Responding to emergency situations
        - Providing customer service

A further issue identified through the research was the importance of training delivery. Comments made by interviewees regarding training delivery led us to develop the following suggested guidelines for the delivery of training

1. Instruction should be a combination of:
    - Site-specific job duties
    - Standard operating procedures
    - Emergency response plans
    - Site familiarity
    - Overview of the security management process

Consideration should be given regarding how training is delivered. Training should be delivered via a mixture of tactics including:

- Video
- Lecture (face to face or online depending upon location of instructors and students)
- Presentations (including PowerPoint)
- In-class assignments
- Use of site equipment and tools
- Students should be encouraged to take extensive notes.

2. Instructor related:
    - Several interviewees identified the importance of instructors having considerable security experience or in order to explain complex security related duties through both a discussion of the duties and the practical realities of completing them. Several interviewees identified that content that was delivered in class always led to successful outcomes without identifying the realities of the actual situations that officers could find themselves in. In particular, they expressed frustration during the limited conflict de-escalation training where the subject(s) they were dealing with always complied immediately.
    - Instructors also additionally required formal training in adult learning. Several interviewees identified that their instructors who performed poorly did not have formal training in adult learning.
    - Students should be given the opportunity to ask questions as they familiarise with the material.
    - Additional skills should include excellent communication skills, patient, supportive of the student in developing skills, lifelong learner, organized, aware of and using successful learning tactics for adults.

3. Scenario based training particularly on complex topics, especially:
    - Rule enforcement: (based on survey results was considered the most complex)
        - Conflict de-escalation
        - Practical use of force
        - Legal use of force

    - Emergency response
    - First aid/CPR
    - Incident management
- Use of equipment available on site. Interviewees identified how important it was to receive training on equipment that was on site.

Finally, several interviewees expressed the belief that experienced officers should be assigned to work one-on-one with newly assigned site officers as part of their training. As a result, the trainer should be provided with the appropriate training to develop a competency in a field training officer. The suggested skills necessary to be successful in this area include:

Adult learning foundational principles in areas including:

- Related document development including lesson plan writing, marking rubrics, course maps and developing course syllabi.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Time management
- Strong site knowledge
- Negotiation skills

We recognise the security related task recommendations require further research to validate them to ensure their effectiveness. However, much of the training-related recommendations are supported by considerable research into adult learning principles and practices.

Front line security work ranges from the easy to the challenging. Training and education are effective tools to assist security practitioners in developing their competencies in order to provide a higher degree of service to their employers and customers, which ultimately will lead to increased protection of assets.

Appendix 2. Methodology

The approach

Given the diversity of tasks undertaken by frontline security workers, the process of identifying the key ones to be included in a survey merits explanation. Kitteringham, in his doctoral thesis[200], had summarised these. He identified key tasks that were common to 35 training programs from around the world; he included reviews of government job occupancy classifications (Canadian National Occupational Classification; United States Standard Occupational Classification Manual; India National Occupational Classification; and British National Occupational Standards); and interviewed a range of security experts for their opinions. From this base task complexity questions were informed by a literature review (as discussed in Section One of the report) and in particular the Enterprise Security Competency Model[201] (ASIS International, 2020). Although this focussed on the competencies for security managers and above, it provided a helpful reference point for extending the work to security officers/guards.

Once a draft questionnaire was developed, it was submitted to an Advisory Committee for comment which led to further refinements. Then the questionnaire was sent to a wide range of experts, including regulators, trainers and those who work with front line workers for further refinements. A final version evolved which was then piloted with security officers working in each of the nine countries selected for the research: Canada, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Nigeria, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and the USA. They were chosen for a variety of reasons including the fact that: they represented different continents; included countries where security officers were known to be active; and where IFPO, the sponsor of the survey, had a footprint and/or were keen to establish one.

Survey

The survey was publicised widely, via IFPO, the sponsors, the research team, security media and associations, through various methods such as social media, articles, newsletters and emails, and other personal contact with relevant organisations and individuals. We engaged with major security companies to ask them to share the survey with their officers/guards. Ultimately, the sample was self-recruited in the respect that participation was voluntary and clearly those with an interest in the topic were most likely to participate.

The survey ran from 9th April to 31st May 2021.

The vast majority of the questions were multiple choice. A small number invited open text responses.

In total, 16,628 survey responses were received. Of these, 479 were removed due to being significantly incomplete, that is, only the initial background

[200] Kitteringham, G. (2017) *op cit.*
[201] University of Phoenix (2014) *op cit*.

questions were completed and none of the main survey questions. In addition 5167 were removed due to showing significant signs of duplication (for example in open comments complex wording with matching formatting/punctuation was used). A further 357 were removed due to containing multiple anomalies or inconsistencies in the response. Therefore, full analysis was completed of 10,625 responses. That said, all questions were optional, therefore the number answering each question varies, and as is common with surveys of this type, the numbers reduce as some respondents drop out as the survey progresses.

Analysis included the frequency responses to each question. Additional analysis was undertaken to assess whether views differed by specific characteristics/sub-groups of respondents. Only those issues that were statistically significant are included in the discussion, evidencing a relationship between the variables (i.e., not occurring by chance). Additional analysis was undertaken by: country, job title, gender, age group, level of education completed, type of employed, sector, length of time working in security, whether the respondent had received on-going training or not, and whether the respondent was required to hold a licence for their security work or not.

Where the number of responses for a specific sub-group were comparatively small these were not considered within the additional analysis, to avoid small numbers skewing the findings. This particularly impacted on country (South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Ecuador were not considered).

Limitations of the survey

Considerable efforts were made to identify and remove duplication and anomalies found in the responses. However, it should be borne in mind that the survey was anonymous, and all questions were optional in order to attract as wide an audience as possible within the relevant countries. As is the case with all surveys of this nature, the results depend on eligible respondents answering purposely and truthfully.

One-to-one interviews

The approach in this work was to engage with survey respondents to explore key aspects of the research in more depth to facilitate further context and insight. The interviews typically lasted thirty minutes and semi-structured interview schedules were used. The schedules were based on expanding on the survey findings. An advantage of a semi-structured schedule is that it gives the flexibility for interviewers to probe the issues raised.

We formally interviewed 42 professionals during May to August 2021:

By gender this equated to:
Males – 36
Females – 6

By country this equated to:
UK – 10
Canada – 9

Ireland – 9
Nigeria – 7
USA – 5
India – 2

About Perpetuity Research

Perpetuity Research is a leading research company with wide expertise in both quantitative and qualitative approaches. We have been extensively involved in evaluating 'what works' (and what does not). Our work has involved helping our clients to understand people's behaviours, perceptions and levels of awareness and in identifying important trends. Our mission statement is 'committed to making a difference', and much of our work has a practical application in terms of informing decision-making and policy formulation.

We work closely with our clients. This includes businesses, national and local governments, associations and international organisations as well as charities and foundations. We operate the Security Research Initiative (the SRI), an annual study of some aspect of the security sector, currently in its fifteenth year.

For more information and details of free publications – including all those resulting from the SRI - please visit: www.perpetuityresearch.com

About the Authors

Professor Martin Gill

Professor Martin Gill is a criminologist and Director of Perpetuity Research which started life as a spin out company from the University of Leicester. He holds honorary/visiting Chairs at the Universities of Leicester and London. Martin has been actively involved in a range of studies relating to different aspects of security, private policing and business crime on topics including: organised crime and fraud; why offenders offend; the (in)effectiveness of different security measures; and the scope of security management. Martin has been extensively involved with evaluation research and with the offender's perspective looking at how they target certain people and premises and aim to circumvent security measures.

He has published 14 books and the third edition of the 'Handbook' of Security' is to be published in 2022. He is the organiser and Chair of the Security Thought Leadership webinar series. Martin is a Fellow of The Security Institute, a member of the Company of Security Professionals (and a Freeman of the City of London). He is a Trustee of the ASIS Foundation. In 2002 the ASIS Security Foundation made a 'citation for distinguished service' in 'recognition of his significant contribution to the security profession'. In 2009 he was one of the country's top 5 most quoted criminologists. In 2010 he was recognised by the BSIA with a special award for 'outstanding service to the security sector'. In 2015 and 2016 he was nominated and shortlisted for the Imbert Prize at the Association of Security Consultants and in the latter he won. In 2016 ASIS International awarded him a Presidential Order of Merit for distinguished service. In 2016 he was entered onto the Register of Chartered Security Professionals. Martin is the Founder of the Outstanding Security

Performance Awards (the OSPAs and Cyber OSPAs) and Tackling Economic Crime Awards (the TECAs).

Charlotte Howell

Charlotte Howell joined Perpetuity in January 2009 and is currently the Research Manager – responsible for managing the delivery of research contracts, and our team of research staff. She also manages the Secured Environments scheme run by Perpetuity Research on behalf of Police CPI.

Charlotte is an accomplished project manager with experience of working with a range of clients including businesses, associations, police forces, government organisations and charities. Charlotte's knowledge and experience spans the range of our areas of expertise – including crime prevention and community safety, security research, and the social aspects of health research. Charlotte is also actively involved in delivering fieldwork and has consulted with a range of individuals, including stakeholders (such as individuals from the police, local authorities, service commissioners and staff), offenders (both in prison and in the community) and clients accessing services (such as drug and alcohol treatment services, domestic abuse services and support services for sex workers). Charlotte is adept at quantitative analysis and has a wealth of experience analysing survey responses, client data and performance/outcomes data.

Prior to working for Perpetuity, Charlotte graduated from the University of the West of England with a first class LLB (Hons) in Law. Following this she received an MSc in Criminology from the University of Leicester. After graduating, Charlotte worked for the Leicester Criminal Justice Drugs Team, analysing and reporting on Class A drug misuse and treatment information, to maintain and improve performance.

Dr Glen Kitteringham

Glen Kitteringham is a Doctor of Security Risk Management (University of Portsmouth) and holds a Master of Science in Security & Crime Risk Management (University of Leicester), and holds qualifications in criminology, adult learning, workplace learning, e-learning and business management.

He has worked in the security industry since 1990 in a variety of positions including loss prevention officer, investigator, security officer, supervisor, manager and director. Since 2010 he has consulted for clients globally providing a variety of security, risk management and education and training services. He was an adjunct instructor with the University of Calgary teaching in their Security Management program from 2008 to 2021 and for the Justice Institute of British Columbia in their undergraduate degree program in security and emergency management since 2010.

He has sat on numerous boards and committees throughout his security career and holds memberships in ASIS International, International CPTED Association, BOMA Calgary Public Safety Committee and the Property Management Institute of Canada providing his expertise on a variety of topics

including risk management, emergency management, adult learning and training and leadership development.

He has undertaken research into several areas including Offender Perspectives and their decision-making process in Shoptheft, Security Practitioners' Perspectives of the Alberta Basic Security Training Programme, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in the Commercial High-Rise, Crime Pattern Analysis in Multi-Tenanted Commercial High-Rise Properties, Security Officers and Workplace Violence & Security Officer Duties and Task Complexity. He has been published on numerous occasions on a variety of topics. His book *Security & Life Safety in the Commercial High-Rise* was published in 2007. His CRISP Report *Lost Laptops=Lost Data* was published in 2008. His book *The Science and Art of Security Risk Assessment* was published in September 2021.

Dr Janice Goldstraw-White

Janice is a criminologist who has worked with Perpetuity since 2010 and has expertise in the areas of crime, governance, audit, risk management and security. With more than 20 years' prior experience as an accountant, mainly in the public sector, she is particularly interested in crime in the workplace, fraudster behaviour and the role of women in white-collar crime. She has extensively researched in the area of white-collar crime both here and in Australia, with a focus on offender accounts of criminal behaviour. She has particular experience in interviewing within prisons and has undertaken over fifty interviews with incarcerated white-collar offenders.

She has managed and delivered on a range of projects including research on tackling fraud in local authorities; fraud in the Middle East; and improving the police response to victims of fraud and scams. Her research interests however are by no means confined to white-collar crime and other research includes why death rates for security officers from COVID-19 are so high; and she is currently involved in a study looking at the use of digital evidence in the investigation and prosecution of serious sexual offences.

Janice's research skills cover the spectrum of qualitative research, including desk-based literature and policy reviews; analysis and mapping of practice and procedures; interviews with professionals and service users; and facilitating focus groups. She also has a good understanding of quantitative data collection methods and analysis.

Janice has published a number of articles and co-authored separate chapters in books on workplace crime and the motives of white-collar criminals. Her own book entitled 'White-Collar Crime: Accounts of Offending Behaviour' was published in October 2011.

Josephine Ramm

Josephine is a highly adaptable social researcher with expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. During her career she has conducted research on behalf of a diverse range of organisations including the Department of Health, Youth Justice Board, Alcohol Education Research

Council, fpa (formerly Family Planning Association) and various private clients including national financial institutions and prominent academics. Josephine holds a BSc in Psychology from the University of Exeter, an MSc in Health Psychology from the University of Sussex. Josephine led on our work for Gloucestershire OPCC conducting the sexual violence needs assessments and prior to that the victim needs assessment. Josephine was also part of the research team conducting victim needs assessments in Avon and Somerset, and Thames Valley. Josephine has specialist expertise in working with vulnerable groups, including for example bereaved children and young people, and is nearing completion of her psychotherapy training.

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