

'Commitment to Regulation'

SIA Conference, 12 October 2011

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Please note that the text below is not a transcript of the speech given but the draft text that Lynne read from. There may therefore be some variation in the final wording and phrasing that Lynne used.

Hello and welcome to the annual SIA conference. I'm sorry I can't be there with you in person but unfortunately I have another commitment today. Thank you though for giving me the opportunity to say a few words.

This conference, hosted by the SIA, presents a fantastic opportunity for you, the members of the private security industry, to come together to discuss the challenges, and contribute to the shaping of, the future of your industry.

The importance of events such as this conference cannot be overstated. Today's conference will help to promote and synchronise the industry's objectives in line with the Government's ambitions for sustained public protection.

The Government's commitment to making substantial reforms to its public bodies culminated in the decision last year that the functions of the SIA need no longer be performed by Government. It was recognised that in the seven years since regulation of the private security industry in England and Wales began, the industry had matured to a level where the Government believes the time was right to give the industry greater responsibility for achieving improved regulation. The fact that the Government has arrived at this conclusion is a testament to all the hard work put in by the SIA and you, the industry as a whole. I am very impressed by how well the private security industry has worked closely with the SIA on developing the detail of the new regime. This is further evidence of the growing maturity and professionalism of the industry, for which you are to be congratulated.

The Government is committed to ensuring it continues to work in tandem with the industry to build on the credibility that has become the hallmark of the private security industry.

With the Government's support, the SIA has started work with colleagues in the private security industry and other key stakeholders to put together a detailed plan for the transition to the new regime. The SIA has set up a Strategic Consultation Group, which includes representatives from the industry, ACPO, the Scottish and Northern Ireland Governments and the Home Office.

Following discussions with both me and the Home Secretary, it has been agreed that the main focus of regulation will be the licensing of businesses. Licences will be issued by the new regulator to businesses that meet set

criteria. With this accountability comes responsibility. There will be robust sanctions against businesses that fail to meet the licensing criteria and terms and conditions, including having their right to trade in the private security industry removed. Licensed businesses will in turn be responsible for ensuring their staff are adequately vetted and trained. The regulator will also maintain a register of all individuals who are eligible to work in the industry, which will be available online. This will support the needs of businesses by providing a common standard for those working in the industry.

During the first half of 2012 the Home Office will be engaging in a public consultation on the proposed changes to private security industry regulation. The Government hopes this will provide both the industry and the public as a whole the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. We consider this dialogue paramount in ensuring a successful transition is established. The consultation will provide insight into how we may best achieve a smooth changeover to the new independent regulator.

The Government will therefore actively encourage both industry and the public to offer their opinions during the public consultation. This will ensure a critical and balanced view is taken and enable a smooth transition to a new, successful, regime.

As I have outlined, there are important developments occurring within the private security sector. The Government hopes that these developments will lead to better regulation of the industry across the UK, ensuring that the private security industry continues to flourish whilst maintaining the high standards it has previously achieved, in helping to secure public protection.

Earlier in the year both I and the Home Secretary met with the SIA to discuss the new regulatory regime. It was agreed at the time that once transition planning was further advanced we would meet again. With that in mind I will be meeting Baroness Henig and Bill Butler in two week's time to discuss progress. I am also looking forward to meeting with staff at the SIA later the same week.

Once again I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to say a few words. I hope the rest of the conference proves to be a successful forum in which you are able to discuss the finer details of the future regulation of the private security sector.

Thank you.