



UKCMA BUYERS GUIDE

Setting the Standard for Procuring Crowd
Management, Security and Stewarding Services

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1. Introduction & Disclaimer

The UK Crowd Management Association (UKCMA) has produced this guide for anyone procuring crowd management, security and stewarding services across events and venues. It is written for buyers throughout the sector, not only for those working with UKCMA members, and serves experienced commissioners and first-time buyers alike. Its purpose is to offer a clear benchmark of what good practice, quality and value for money look like in a rapidly evolving industry, so that buyers understand the services they are purchasing, the standards they should expect and the levels of accountability they should require. Used well, it supports more consistent, safe and professional procurement.

It is not a rule book, a definitive statement for every circumstance, a replacement for legal advice or a commercial endorsement of any single provider. Every effort has been made to reflect recognised and accepted good practice at the time of publication, but no guide can be a one-size-fits-all solution. Treat it as an aide-memoire that supports informed decision-making rather than an exhaustive or definitive authority. It offers general guidance suitable for many UK crowd management environments, and it does not replace event-specific risk assessments, organisational policies, contractual requirements, licensing conditions, statutory duties or instructions issued through Event Control. Legal requirements and official guidance change, so buyers should always check that they are relying on the latest authorised information and seek specialist advice where necessary.

Throughout, the depth of evidence requested should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and risk profile of the event or venue. A smaller, lower-risk operation will not need the volume of documentation a major event demands, but every buyer should still be able to establish that roles, competence, supervision, welfare, insurance and escalation arrangements are suitable.

The United Kingdom Crowd Management Association is the leading professional body for the organisations and professionals who deliver and support crowd management across festivals, sport, arenas, stadia, public spaces, heritage, arts and cultural sites and large-scale events in the UK. Section 9 sets out what membership involves.

How this guide follows the procurement cycle



2. Defining the Services You Are Buying

Clear definitions protect buyers from unsafe assumptions, inappropriate staffing and non-compliant delivery. When requesting quotes, buyers should require suppliers to define the service being offered and explain how it aligns with the operational need. SIA licensing is an important safeguard, because it demonstrates that individuals undertaking licensable activity have met prescribed training and vetting requirements, and stewarding roles must never be used as an unsafe substitute for licensable security activity.

Crowd management	Security	Stewarding
Strategic planning and operational delivery focused on how people move, behave and experience an event. Emphasis on prevention, communication and safe crowd flow.	Core security services, particularly SIA-licensed activity, protecting people, assets and venues through access control, searching, enforcement and incident response. Emphasis on control, protection and legal compliance.	Customer-facing services providing guidance, information and early risk identification. Emphasis on customer care, observation and support.
Buyers should expect • Crowd management plans • Risk assessments • Deployment rationale • Leadership and supervision structures • Communication and escalation procedures	Buyers should expect • SIA licence verification • Search policies and prohibited-items procedures • Use-of-force guidance • Incident reporting systems • Emergency response capability	Buyers should expect • Role-specific training content • Briefing and sign-on processes • Welfare arrangements • Communication tools • Clear escalation routes to supervisors and Event Control

Related specialist services

Event safety management, medical provision, traffic management, fire safety, counter-terrorism advice and dog handling may interface with crowd management but require distinct competence, qualifications, insurance and oversight. Quotes should identify these services separately and make clear where responsibilities begin and end.

3. Re-Benchmarking Your Approach

The events and venue sector has changed significantly, and buyers who rely on how things used to be done risk non-compliance, reputational damage and unsafe operations. The key industry shifts are:

Increased legislative and regulatory oversight	Higher public expectations of safety, security and accessibility
Greater scrutiny of staff welfare, employment models and ethical recruitment	Workforce shortages and competition for experienced personnel
Rising demand for sustainable, accessible and inclusive operations and transparent supply chains	Technology shaping planning, communication, data protection and reporting
A shift from head-count purchasing towards qualified leadership, specialist capability, supervision and measurable outcomes	Changing security threats alongside new legal expectations

Re-benchmarking keeps suppliers aligned with current good practice rather than outdated habits. Buyers should revisit specifications, budgets and performance measures at each tender or renewal rather than simply repeating the previous contract.

4. Buyer Accountability & Martyn's Law

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025. As of July 2026 the main duties have not yet commenced, and the SIA indicates that the Act is expected to come into force in spring 2027. Organisations that may fall within scope should use the implementation period to understand the legislation, review arrangements and prepare proportionately.

Accountability cannot be bought in

Under the Act, the responsible person will be the individual, organisation or company with relevant control of a qualifying premises or event. That legal responsibility cannot be delegated to a contracted security or crowd management provider, although tasks may be. Procurement therefore supports compliance but does not transfer accountability.

Where supplier personnel are expected to carry out or support public protection procedures, they should be adequately informed, briefed and, where appropriate, trained. Buyers should require the supplier to explain how its staff will support each of the four procedures:

Evacuation	Invacuation	Lockdown	Communication
Moving people out of the premises or event, or away from an affected area	Moving people to a safer place within the premises or event	Securing the premises or event to restrict entry, exit or movement where appropriate	Alerting people to danger and providing clear instructions

Contracts, deployment plans and briefings should identify who initiates, communicates and supports each procedure; how the supplier interfaces with Event Control and the emergency services; what equipment or systems are required; and how arrangements will be tested. Rather than buying generic claims of compliance, buyers should ask how the supplier will support the specific procedures of that event or venue.

5. What You Should Ask For When Requesting Quotes

The most useful procurement questions are practical, accountable and linked to the real operating conditions of the event or venue. The areas below help buyers assess whether a proposed service is safe, compliant and capable of delivering value.

5.1 Scope, Roles & Interfaces

Establish exactly which service is being quoted for, how the supplier differentiates crowd management, security and stewarding in planning, deployment, uniform and supervision, and what each role will and will not do. Confirm how the command structure interfaces with Event Control, the venue team and the emergency services, how competence is assured for the specific role and location assigned, and which responsibilities remain with the buyer, venue operator or other contractors. Questions 1 to 4 in Appendix A can be used as they stand.

5.2 Standards, Accreditation & Compliance

Buyers should ask suppliers to evidence alignment with recognised standards and schemes, noting that applicability depends on the service and operating context.

Standard or scheme	What it covers
SIA Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS)	Voluntary quality assurance for security suppliers
BS 8406	Event stewarding and crowd safety services
BS 7499	Static site guarding and mobile patrol services
BS 7858	Screening of individuals working in a secure environment
BS 7960	Door supervision services, where relevant
ISO 9001	Quality management systems
ISO 45001	Occupational health and safety management systems, where relevant

Standards are not a tick-box exercise. Ask which parts of a standard apply to the proposed service, how compliance is audited and how any non-conformities are corrected.

5.3 Employment, Supply Chain & Welfare

Buyers should seek transparency across the entire labour supply chain, including subcontractors and agency workers. Ask suppliers to explain:

Employment and supply chain	Welfare, wellbeing and culture
• Employment model, including PAYE, subcontracting, self-employment and agency use • How pay rates, holiday entitlement, working time and other legal obligations are managed • How subcontractors are selected, vetted, supervised and audited • Whether recruitment fees or other worker-paid charges are prohibited • How modern slavery and labour exploitation risks are identified and managed • What confidential whistleblowing and grievance routes are available	• How fatigue is managed through shift design, breaks, travel planning and fair rostering • What welfare facilities, hydration, food, shelter and personal protective equipment will be provided • How mental health is supported, and how staff who experience abuse, violence or traumatic incidents are assisted • Their approach to diversity, inclusion, accessibility and sustainability

Buyers should reserve appropriate contractual audit rights and require suppliers to address material concerns within agreed timescales. Poor supply-chain practices can result in untrained or unsupported staff, legal exposure, service failure and reputational damage.

5.4 Evidence of Quality & Planning Documentation

Request proportionate evidence and documentation suitable for the stage of procurement:

Evidence of quality	Planning documentation
• Current certificates and audit reports • Training and competence records • SIA licence-checking processes • Internal quality assurance arrangements • Relevant case studies and references • Incident, near-miss and improvement data	• Risk assessments • Crowd management and security plans • Deployment schedules and position plans • Briefing materials and role cards • Command and escalation diagrams • Emergency and contingency plans • Communications plans • Post-event debriefs and improvement logs

Accreditation demonstrates a commitment to external scrutiny and continuous improvement, but weigh it alongside the supplier's event-specific plan, leadership capability, workforce arrangements and record of delivery. Strong planning and leadership reduce ambiguity and evidence that the supplier understands the assignment, and generic templates should be adapted to the event or venue rather than submitted unchanged.

5.5 Insurance

Buyers should require evidence of insurance that is current, issued by a reputable insurer and proportionate to the services, scale and risk profile of the assignment. Cover will commonly include public liability, employers' liability and professional indemnity. Cyber cover may also be relevant where the supplier handles personal data, operates digital access-control systems, provides technology platforms or manages sensitive operational information.

The contract should specify minimum limits, any required endorsements, notification obligations and responsibility for maintaining cover throughout the term. Review exclusions, and do not assume that a certificate alone confirms every proposed activity is covered.

Before you accept a certificate

Check that it is in date, that the insured name matches the company you are contracting with, that the limits meet your contract, and that the activities described include everything you are buying, including any subcontracted or specialist work.

6. Pricing & Value

A credible service cannot be procured on head count and hourly rate alone. Buyers should evaluate whole-service value, including planning, leadership, supervision, training, welfare, resilience and post-event learning, rather than defaulting to the lowest headline price. Ask suppliers for a transparent pricing breakdown identifying, as appropriate:

Front-line labour and applicable pay assumptions	Supervision, management and Event Control roles	Planning, meetings, site visits and documentation
Training, briefings and exercises	Uniform, equipment, radios and technology	Travel, accommodation and subsistence
Welfare provision and contingency resources	Overheads and commercial margin	VAT and any other pass-through costs

Abnormally low bids should be challenged. Ask the supplier to explain how the price supports lawful pay, adequate supervision, training, welfare, insurance and contingency, since a bid that cannot fund the promised delivery model may expose both parties to operational and reputational risk.

Price changes should be managed transparently. Contracts should identify the assumptions that may trigger an adjustment, such as changes in statutory pay, scope, operating hours, risk profile or mobilisation requirements, and set out the process for agreeing any variation.

The independently calculated real Living Wage, which is distinct from the statutory National Living Wage, is an important benchmark when assessing whether labour assumptions are credible and socially responsible. Where a proposed rate does not support that benchmark, the buyer should understand the reasons, the legal position and the likely effects on recruitment, retention and service quality.

7. Performance Data, KPIs & Corrective Action

Buyers should agree to a manageable set of indicators that reflect the purpose of the contract. Measures should combine compliance, operational outcomes and workforce quality rather than rewarding attendance alone.

Category	Example indicators
Operational performance	Incident rates, near misses, interventions, queue and ingress performance
Training and competence	Qualifications, role-specific training, briefings, refresher activity
Workforce stability and welfare	Retention, lateness, absence, breaks, fatigue, welfare concerns
Planning and documentation	Risk assessments, plans, briefings, deployment schedules, debriefs
Compliance and auditing	ACS, standards, insurance, licence checks, internal audits
Client relationship	Communication, collaboration, responsiveness, issue resolution
Reputation and experience	References, case studies, comparable assignments

When Performance Slips

KPIs are useful only if the contract explains what happens when performance falls below the agreed level.

Buyers should respond proportionately, focusing first on restoring safe, compliant delivery:

1	Confirm the facts and assess any immediate safety or legal implications
2	Hold a documented service review with the supplier and require a corrective action plan with named owners, actions, evidence and timescales
3	Increase monitoring or assurance activity until performance stabilises, using agreed escalation routes and keeping relevant operational leaders informed

The buyer should also examine whether its own specification, budget, information-sharing, late changes or contract-management practices contributed. Corrective action should address the system, not simply attribute fault to front-line personnel.

8. Buyer Renewal Checklist

Before renewing or re-tendering a contract, buyers should:

☐	Review the scope and confirm that role definitions remain accurate	☐	Compare performance against agreed KPIs and service outcomes
☐	Review incident, near-miss, complaint, training and welfare data	☐	Confirm current accreditations, licences, insurance and quality systems
☐	Examine pay, employment and subcontracting arrangements	☐	Review pricing assumptions and challenge unsupported cost reductions
☐	Conduct a joint debrief and confirm completion of corrective actions	☐	Update plans for legislative, threat, venue or operational changes
☐	Document lessons learned and the rationale for the procurement decision		

Returning clients can drive standards higher by expecting consistency, transparency and measurable impact.

9. Why UKCMA Membership Matters

In today's evolving safety landscape, choosing the right security and stewarding partner is more than a procurement decision. It is a commitment to protecting people, venues and reputations, and it is why a UKCMA member provider offers real advantages over a non-screened or non-member company. Membership is not automatic. It is earned by meeting strict criteria and undergoing careful vetting, so that only high-quality, professional organisations are admitted. That is what maintains the association's position as the UK's leading professional body for crowd management and event security. Here is what it means for you:

Higher standards and professionalism Members collectively represent the highest performers in the crowd management and event security sector, continually raising industry standards in training, codes of practice and public safety delivery.	Credibility and accountability Membership means following recognised good practice, upholding the UKCMA Code of Practice and remaining accountable to a respected industry body, giving you reassurance that your provider meets rigorous expectations around safety, conduct and capability.
Trusted by government and industry bodies UKCMA is regularly consulted by national stakeholders including the Security Industry Authority (SIA), the Home Office, National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) and the wider Events Industry, promoting current legislation, guidance and emerging risk insights.	A commitment to continuous improvement From shaping policy to driving innovation in crowd safety, members contribute to a shared industry mission of safer crowds and safer venues across the UK.

Members commit to shared values, collaboration and professional development, which gives buyers a useful benchmark. Selecting a member can therefore offer added confidence that the services you choose are informed by established practice and professional standards. Membership should complement, not replace, your own proportionate due diligence and contract management, and final responsibility for safety and operational outcomes always remains with the commissioning organisation.

Appendix A: Sample Tender Questions

These questions can be adapted to the scale and risk of the procurement. Buyers should request concise, evidenced answers rather than generic marketing statements.

No.	Theme	Question
1	Scope and responsibilities	Describe the service you are proposing and identify the tasks, decisions and risks that remain the responsibility of the buyer, venue operator or other contractors.
2	Command and control	Provide your command structure and explain how supervisors and managers will interface with Event Control and the emergency services.
3	Deployment rationale	Explain how you calculated staffing, supervision and specialist roles, including the assumptions used.
4	Competence	Explain how you verify that each person is trained, licensed where required, briefed and competent for the role and location assigned.
5	Martyn's Law preparation	Explain how your personnel will support the venue or event's evacuation, invacuation, lockdown and communication procedures, and how these arrangements will be briefed and tested.
6	Supply chain	Identify any subcontractors or agencies and describe how they are selected, vetted, supervised, paid and audited.
7	Welfare and fatigue	Describe your arrangements for breaks, shift length, travel, food, hydration, shelter, mental health and support following abuse or traumatic incidents.
8	Ethical recruitment	Explain how you prevent recruitment fees, labour exploitation and modern slavery risks, and provide confidential reporting routes.
9	Price and value	Provide a transparent pricing breakdown and explain how the proposal funds lawful pay, supervision, training, welfare, insurance, contingency and management.
10	Insurance	Provide details of relevant insurance, limits and exclusions, and confirm that the proposed activities are covered.
11	Performance	Propose a small set of meaningful KPIs and explain how you will report performance, investigate failures and complete corrective actions.
12	Experience and learning	Provide examples from comparable work, including a challenge or failure, what was learned and how practice changed as a result.