



(Just before the world went home and locked the door, TPSO's Rollo Davies attended a "Skills Summit" in London, organised by the SIA, to discuss the future direction of training and development within the UK security industry. All indications are that the SIA and all major industry stakeholders, want improvements, but it seems like finally, real steps are being taken in the right direction. Rollo summarises the event.....Ed)



SIA Skills Summit, London, March 2020.

I have to say that I attended this event with hope, but a healthy dose of scepticism. If there have been no fundamental changes and improvements to the mandatory training and development of front line security industry workers over the last

2 decades, was this going to be anything more than a talking shop?

There has been one significant change in the SIA in the last couple of years however, and that is the man at the top.

Ian Todd was a front line paramedic in the Manchester area. Now there are few professions that I respect as much as security officers, but paramedic is certainly one. The absolute poster boy for self improvement and professional development, Ian studied, worked hard and made his way from the coal face to the boardroom.



Ian moved from his role as Deputy Director General of what was formerly the I.P.C.C. now the Independent Office for Police Conduct, in February 2019. Since that time there has been a gradual and noticeable change in the stance and attitude of our regulatory body. Although it isn't possible to reach a leadership position in a Government department, without the ability to play politics and maintain favour with political masters, Ian has a genuine understanding and more

importantly, appreciation of the pressures and demands of life on the front line, and there has been a welcome increase in understanding and appreciation coming from the SIA of late, with good news stories about licenced security officers being sought and distributed on social media.

A welcome change to the previous role-call of offenders, that the SIA managed to successfully prosecute.....

I think the biggest indication of change within our regulatory body was when it announced a reduction in the licence fee last year. A move that was met with a degree of cynicism in some quarters. Then the SIA, to everyone's surprise, lowered the fees again! This went against all expectations and was met with universal praise.

But I digress.

As mentioned, The 'Skills Summit' was announced as a forum to examine ways to improve the industry as a whole, by overhauling the current training and development system.

Sadly one thing wasn't covered at this event, and can not be ignored for very long if any improvements are to be possible. The abuse of the testing system by many training organisations who simply will not let participants fail a course. A problem that could probably have been anticipated from the outset if anyone had considered 20 years ago, that training companies want to gain repeat work from, and "please" the security companies, (or individuals) that pay them, by ensuring that a maximum number of people pass the course. Regardless of genuine levels of knowledge attained, or competence of the individual.

I can only see one solution to this. Training companies run the courses and provide a certificate of completion to the individuals concerned, then the SIA does the testing and marking of test papers. Expensive, yes, but quite simply the only sensible way for one of the original aims of the regulator, improvement of individual standards, to ever be achieved.

If this problem can be overcome, then there were some excellent ideas that arose from the summit.

Firstly, best practice, law, and guidance on all aspects of the industry, change on a regular basis. The only way for a genuine front line professional to stay up to date with the changes, after the initial basic training is completed, is to participate in some degree of **C.P.D. (Continuing Professional Development)**. This isn't something daunting, and just reading this magazine provides the reader with 'points' for some existing free CPD schemes, including the excellent offering from The Security Institute, which isn't just free to participate in, but is already open to NON MEMBERS!

Basically, most CPD schemes run like this: Each year you need to achieve a certain amount of points, which will be checked and verified, to attain your confirmation certificate. These points can be obtained by reading security industry publications (Especially TPSO obsvs!), attending security industry events, completing any security related training or obtaining further or higher qualifications. If you're reading this, then you probably already tick the right boxes.

This isn't going to be a burden to individual security officers as quite simply, and for example only, reading relevant material, attending a first aid and a manual handling course in a 12 month period, would probably be enough to demonstrate your commitment and gain the certificate.

It will help to 'weed out' those, that sadly we have all encountered, that simply can not be

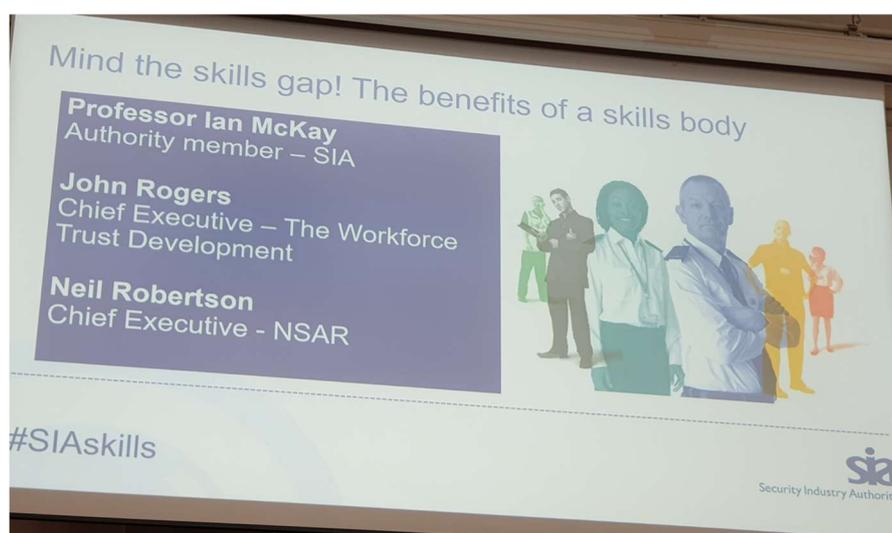


bothered to grow as a professional in the field of protection, and who thought that this industry was an easy way to earn money, by doing nothing. (Thank you Job Centres for sending the lazy and disinterested our way!)

I think that this, although not a magic bullet, will help to some degree, with the professionalisation of the industry, without putting an extra burden on the already committed professionals working within it.

The second idea, which was a no brainer to be honest, is the establishment of an **SIA Skills Board**. This will include individuals from all over the industry and give these stakeholders a say in the direction, implementation and ongoing assessment of future training and development initiatives.

One concern I had was the idea from SIA leadership, that private security industry employers would take the lead in this group. These employers have done little over the last two decades to improve the industry, either individually, or as members of the many industry professional bodies out there, so this emphasis smacks of 'keeping the customer happy' and I feel is misguided. Of course the big security companies need to be involved, but so do representatives of 'quality' training organisations, benign security industry bodies (Security Institute, ASIS, NAHS, NASDU, BBA, Working the Doors, ISRM, etc) and most importantly, representatives from the front line of the industry! Front line representatives are quite simply the only genuine, accurate source of feedback on how any SIA initiative will work in reality and must not be ignored.



Rest assured that TPSO will fight to make sure we have somebody involved in this group, and will loudly question its effectiveness and validity if we are 'overlooked'..... Put simply, YOU tell us what needs tweaking and improving, and we will talk to the SIA about it moving forward.

All in all however, yet again I came away feeling optimistic about the chance of genuine and positive change. The SIA of 10 years ago, would never have called together so many outside organisations to discuss the future in this way. It seems that change has started, with the regulator taking the lead. Lets just keep up the momentum and once COVID-19 has gone on its merry way, lets hit the ground running and turn all the good ideas in to industry improving reality!

Thanks again to the SIA for holding this event.

Rollo.