

S12 – Security Guarding Industry Leadership Group

Minutes Vetting and Digitisation Workstream Meeting

Date:	27 August 2026
Time:	10:00am (BST)
Location:	Microsoft Teams (Video Conference)
Workstream Chair:	Keith Middleton – Security Guarding Leadership Group

Attendees

Keith Middleton – Workstream Chair	Jenna Smith (S12 Comms)
Paul Fullwood - S12 COO	Jessica Spencer (External)
Clare Rogers NSI (NSI)	Leigh Turner (External)
Christine Lee (External)	Richard Harris (External)
Liv (External)	Paddy Kyle (BSIA)
Teresa O'Neill (External)	Courtney Morton (External)

Apologies

Paul Evans – S12 Chair	Abbey Petkar– S12 Member
Anisah Mehmood (S12 Administrator)	

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

1.1 Attendance and Introductions

Keith Middleton welcomed attendees and noted that some participants may join later. He explained that the group had been discussing BS7858 screening standards across several recent meetings and that the purpose of the session was to continue those discussions in greater detail.

1.2 S12 Strategic overview

Paul Fullwood provided an update on S12 activities and reiterated the importance of maintaining a professional and respectful approach to discussions through the Code of Conduct.

Paul outlined S12's key objectives, which include:

S12 Workstreams – Confidential



- Supporting public protection and public safety.
- Raising standards across the private security industry.
- Promoting collaboration between industry stakeholders and regulatory bodies.

1.3 Strategic Update

Paul Fullwood provided a strategic update on recent S12 activity, including:

- Establishment of a new Canine Workstream, led by Gemma Newman and Glen Tonkyn.
- Engagement with the Home Office regarding additional investigatory and regulatory powers for the Security Industry Authority (SIA).
- Support for Home Office consultation activity relating to Mandatory Business Licensing.

2. BS7858 Screening Standards – input from Clare Rogers - NSI

2.1 Discussion and Clarification

The workstream had previously highlighted questions to discuss in the workstream.

2.1.1 Interpretation of BS7858 Standards - *What are the main inconsistencies in the interpretation of BS7858 standards across auditors and accreditation bodies?*

- Certification standards should be applied consistently across certification bodies. Any inconsistencies between auditors should be raised with the certification body so they can review and correct interpretations.
- Organisations can seek clarification or challenge audit findings through certification bodies, industry groups such as the BSIA, and formal appeals processes - they can clarify interpretations and review disputed audit outcomes.
- Overseas candidates should be screened using the same principles as UK candidates.

2.1.2 SIA Guidance vs BSI Interpretation - *What examples are there of inconsistencies between SIA guidance and BSI interpretation?*

- SIA and certification bodies should have aligned interpretations of BS7858 because they are represented on the same governing and contribute directly



to the development of the standard. As a result, interpretations should be consistent across the industry.

- BSI does not interpret the standard itself. As the standards owner, BSI forwards queries to the relevant committee, whose members, including certification bodies, the SIA, BSIA, and industry representatives, provide the official response and interpretation.
- Industry stakeholders are encouraged to participate in shaping the standard. BS7858 drafts are published for public consultation, allowing anyone to submit constructive comments and suggestions.

2.1.3 Variability in Vetting Outcomes - *What is meant by variability in vetting outcomes between companies, and how might this create risk or an unfair competitive advantage?*

- Differences in vetting outcomes can occur for several reasons, including organisations applying requirements above the minimum BS7858 standard. As a result, a candidate may not meet screening requirements with one company but may do so with another.
- Industry-wide compliance varies significantly, with some organisations choosing not to pursue certification or fully comply with screening, licensing, and right-to-work requirements. This contributes to perceptions of inconsistency and an uneven competitive environment.
- Audit scrutiny is not applied differently to large and small organisations. Audits are based on sampling, with larger organisations receiving more audit time and larger file samples due to volume. Smaller organisations may have a higher proportion of files reviewed because they have fewer new starters, but the assessment approach and expectations remain the same.

2.1.4 Overseas Employment Verification - *What are the key practical challenges associated with verifying overseas employment history and addressing documentation gaps?*

- Overseas applicants must be screened using the same standards as UK applicants.
- Applicants who cannot provide sufficient evidence may not meet BS7858 requirements. If an individual cannot demonstrate what they were doing during the relevant screening period, regardless of the reason, they may be unable to satisfy the standard. This is not a judgement on their character or trustworthiness, but a requirement of the screening process.



- Character references are no longer recognised as a valid screening method under BS7858. They were removed because they were considered easy to abuse and provided limited value.

2.1.5 Duplication of Checks and Responsibilities - *Concerns have been raised regarding the duplication of checks (for example, DBS and employer checks) and a lack of clarity around responsibilities across stakeholders. We would welcome further discussion and examples to help explore this issue in more detail.*

- DBS checks do not need to be duplicated where an individual already holds a valid SIA license. Under BS7858, a valid SIA license, DBS check, or role-specific check e.g. NPCC Appendix C can satisfy the requirement. Additional DBS checks are only required where specified by the role or a contractual customer requirement.
- Responsibility for screening always remains with the employer. While outsourced screening providers may gather and verify information, the employing organisation must review the completed file, ensure it meets BS7858 requirements, and make the final employment decision.
- Digitisation and reducing duplication offer potential benefits but present significant challenges. Industry discussions continue around screening passports and transferable digital screening records, but concerns remain regarding data protection, ownership of information, data currency, and industry-wide adoption.

2.1.6 Group Discussion

The group continued its ongoing review and discussion of BS7858 screening standards. Attendees explored practical application of the standard and discussed areas where organisations have experienced differing interpretations during audits and assessments. Clare Rogers was able to update on questions submitted during the session.

2.2 Audit Consistency

Clare Rogers advised that where organisations disagree with findings raised during audits, concerns should be raised directly with the relevant certification body.

It was noted that:

- Different auditors may occasionally interpret requirements differently.
- Certification bodies are responsible for reviewing concerns and ensuring consistency.



- Dialogue between organisations, auditors and certification bodies is important to clarify expectations and resolve discrepancies.
- Where inconsistencies arise, certification bodies may need to provide further guidance to assessors regarding the correct approach.

3. Key Observations

3.1 Value of Industry Collaboration

Keith Middleton thanked attendees for their participation and contributions over several months of discussions, noting that the work had improved understanding of BS7858 requirements and their application.

3.2 Ongoing Development

It was agreed that notes from the session would be circulated and that the group may revisit BS7858 screening standards at a future date to explore specific areas in greater detail.

3.3 Industry Standards and Mandatory Business Licensing

The discussion concluded with recognition that mandatory business licensing has the potential to address a number of long-standing industry challenges, including:

- Labour exploitation.
- Poor screening practices.
- Inconsistent compliance standards.

It was acknowledged that implementation remains a longer-term objective requiring continued engagement with stakeholders and government.

4. AOB (Any Other Business)

4.1 Additional Questions and Support

Attendees were encouraged to submit any further questions following the meeting. Clare Rogers indicated that organisations should go to their own auditing body with queries. If organisations are not content with this, matters should be sent to the BSI.



5. Next Meeting Date

No date was agreed during the meeting. A future session may be arranged to revisit BS7858-related topics and examine specific issues in greater detail.

6. Close of Meeting

Keith Middleton thanked Clare Rogers for her presentation and expertise and thanked all attendees for their engagement and professional participation throughout the discussion.

The meeting was formally closed.

Action Summary Table

Action Reference	Action Description	Meeting Date	Owner	Deadline
1- 27/08/26	Circulate meeting notes to attendees or signpost to website	27 Aug 26	S12 Secretariat – Anisah Mehmood	03/09/26
2 – 27/08/26	Consider future session to review specific BS7858 topics in greater detail	27 Aug 26	Keith Middleton	03/09/26
3 – 27/08/26	Organisations with concerns regarding audit findings to raise them with the relevant certification body	27 Aug 26	All	Open
4- 27/08/26	Submit any follow-up questions arising from the discussion to Clare Rogers	27 Aug 26	All	Open
5- 27/08/29	Consider next steps for digitization objectives and future S12 session.	27 Aug 26	Keith Middleton Paul Fullwood Anisah Mehmood	15/09/26