

SaferGems

THE JEWEL IN CRIME PREVENTION

The Year in Review

SaferGems in 2025



THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SECURITY INDUSTRY

Founding Sponsors:

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www.bsia.co.uk/safergems



The National Association of Jewellers

Affiliated Sponsors:



About SaferGems

SaferGems is a major initiative against crime in the Jewellery, Pawn Brokers, Antiques and Fine Art Trades, hosted by the BSIA and funded by the retail jewellery industry through our founding sponsors TH March Insurance Brokers and The National Association of Jewellers (NAJ).



The National
Association
of Jewellers

Founding Sponsors:



TH March
Insurance Since 1887

SaferGems was introduced in June 2009 following concerns about the increase in crime committed against the jewellery industry. It is intended to collate attacks, incidents, and intelligence in relation to jewellery crime around the UK. SaferGems, which has strong links to all the UK police forces, records details of crimes against the jewellery/pawnbroking industry, sends alerts to its members. A key role of SaferGems is to coordinate data across police forces to improve identification and conviction of criminals, circulates images and new crime trends and assists the police in linking offences and offenders.

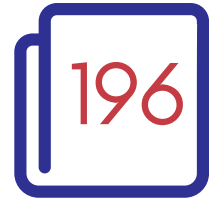


SaferGems in 2025:



ALERTS AND BULLETINS **CIRCULATED**

ANALYTICAL REPORTS PROVIDED FOR THE POLICE



CRIMES BELIEVED TO **HAVE BEEN PREVENTED**

ASSISTED UK & US LAW ENFORCEMENT WITH THE **IDENTIFICATION, ARREST & CONVICTION OF SUSPECTS**



WATCHES LOCATED ON THE BASIS OF SAFERGEMS REGISTRATION **WITH THE ART LOSS REGISTER**

During 2025 SaferGems recorded:



22 ROBBERIES (**6** ARMED) WITH **16** CONFIRMED CRIMES AND APPROXIMATELY **£516,000** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN. **52%** DECREASE IN ROBBERY AND **68%** DECREASE IN ARMED ROBBERY. LOSSES FELL BY **87%**

173 REPORTS OF THEFT WITH **142** CONFIRMED CASES & APPROXIMATELY **£848,000** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN. **3%** DECREASE IN THEFT. LOSSES FELL BY **78%**



- 39** REPORTS OF FRAUD WITH **17** CONFIRMED CASES AND APPROXIMATELY **£70,000** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN. **44%** DECREASE IN FRAUD. LOSSES FELL BY **74%**

- 77** REPORTS OF BURGLARY WITH **55** CONFIRMED CASES AND APPROXIMATELY **£4.4 MILLION** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN. **24%** INCREASE IN BURGLARY. LOSSES INCREASED BY **83%**



Crime Trends in 2025:

Robbery

SaferGems did not record any robbery series of note during 2025, with overall activity remaining relatively stable across the industry. The robbery offences that did occur were isolated and opportunistic in nature rather than coordinated or repeat attacks linked to organised groups. Incidents were predominantly attributed to local offenders or individuals travelling across regional borders. While overall volumes remained low, these offences highlight the continued need for vigilance, consistent security standards, and timely information sharing between members and law enforcement partners to deter opportunistic criminality and maintain the positive position seen throughout the year.



Organised Crime

During 2025, SaferGems continued to work closely with UK law enforcement partners in response to criminal activity linked to organised crime gangs originating from South America. Most of these crimes involved follow-off “punctured tyre” distraction thefts, typically targeting victims travelling from jewellery premises or trade events after handling high-value goods. Ongoing intelligence sharing and coordinated engagement supported a number of investigations and helped members remain alert to emerging tactics.

Organised “Hole in the Wall” and rooftop burglaries continued to present a serious threat to the jewellery industry throughout the year, with several high-value offences recorded. A number of these incidents were attributed to Romanian nationals operating as part of organised criminal networks.

In July 2025, SaferGems received intelligence indicating a large number of a Romanian OCG had relocated from the United States back to mainland Europe, including the UK. Between August and December 2025, SaferGems recorded a notable increase in reports of distraction and sleight of hand thefts linked to known Romanian OCG members, primarily occurring within retail environments where offenders used deception and coordinated distraction techniques to remove jewellery without immediate detection. The combined efforts of SaferGems, members and UK law enforcement partners meant a significant number of attempts by this particular group were foiled and individuals walked away empty-handed. These incidents reinforce the importance of staff vigilance, robust in-store procedures, and prompt reporting to support intelligence development and disruption activity.

Towards the end of the 2025, SaferGems also identified a small increase in out-of-hours burglary offences. These incidents typically involved offenders smashing window displays or doors to gain entry, forcing security shutters, breaking display cabinets, and using disc cutters to create entry points through doors.

Incidents of note

Throughout 2025, SaferGems played a key role in a number of incidents where active criminals were arrested, identified or prevented from committing further offences, including theft and fraud. Working closely with UK police forces, SaferGems provided intelligence and support in the following cases:

January 2025

SaferGems assisted Essex Police in securing the conviction of an Irish male responsible for stealing approximately £195,000 worth of Rolex watches and other high-value branded watches from retail stores across Essex and other parts of the UK. On 10th January 2025, Patrick McDonagh was sentenced to three years in a Young Offender's Institution after coercing shop staff into removing Rolex watches from secure cabinets before stealing them.

Multi-Force Operation – Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Avon & Somerset and Thames Valley Police

SaferGems supported several police forces in the arrest of two males linked to a series of high-value watch thefts in Leicester, Nuneaton and Bedminster. The suspects were also wanted by Thames Valley Police in connection with a £15,000 theft from an Apple Store. In April 2025, both offenders were sentenced, receiving custodial sentences of 20 months' imprisonment and a 12-month sentence suspended for two years respectively.

February 2025

Cumbria, South Wales and Thames Valley Police

SaferGems assisted Cumbria, South Wales and Thames Valley Police with the identification, arrest and conviction of a 44-year-old Romanian National sought in connection with distraction and sleight of hand theft offences in Whitehaven, Cardiff and Oxford. On 4th February 2025, the suspect entered a jewellery store in Whitehaven and requested to view gold jewellery. Store staff recognised him from SaferGems Alert documentation and refused to engage. Upon his departure, staff immediately contacted Cumbria Police who attended the area and arrested the suspect.



March 2025

Multi-Force Investigations

SaferGems assisted Sussex, Avon & Somerset, Dorset, Hertfordshire and Northumbria Police with the identification of a 35-year-old Romanian male linked to a series of distraction and sleight-of-hand "switch" thefts. In each incident, the suspect entered stores offering gold chains for sale which were concealed in a glittery bag or pouch. He claimed he required cash to purchase a new car. After agreeing a price with the jeweller for the genuine chains, the suspect would deliberately distract staff enabling him to switch the genuine chains for counterfeits. He would then leave the store with the agreed cash payment before the deception was discovered.

SaferGems also supported Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and Northamptonshire Police with the identification of a 24-year-old male wanted in connection with high-value fraudulent transactions in Beeston, Congleton and Kettering.

Incidents of note

April 2025

Saw the formal identification of a 36-year-old male linked by SaferGems to a series of high-value fraudulent transactions at stores in Whitley Bay, Torquay, Cheltenham, Devizes and Cirencester. During the same period, SaferGems also assisted US Law Enforcement with the identification of a 26-year-old Romanian National sought in connection with a \$70,000 theft from a jewellery store in Washington, DC. The suspect was known to SaferGems following a series of distraction and sleight-of-hand thefts across the UK in March 2023.

May 2025

SaferGems assisted Thames Valley Police with the identification of a 29-year-old male responsible for stealing £10,000 worth of gold bracelets from a store in Milton Keynes. The suspect was known to SaferGems following a high-value theft in Leeds in June 2023.

In addition, SaferGems assisted Dorset Police with the identification of a 35-year-old Romanian female sought in connection with a £6,000 distraction and sleight-of-hand theft at a store in Christchurch on 26th April 2025. The suspect was known to SaferGems following similar offences at stores across England during 2022.

July 2025

SaferGems identified two Romanian Nationals responsible for distraction and sleight-of-hand thefts in Wiltshire, Surrey and Suffolk. These identifications marked the beginning of a wider series of investigations linked to an international Romanian organised crime group.

August 2025

During the summer SaferGems continued to receive reports of criminal activity by an international Romanian Organised Crime Group. During the month SaferGems supported Wiltshire, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Norfolk, Surrey, Gloucestershire, Cambridgeshire, West Yorkshire, Metropolitan and Police Scotland in identifying and disrupting the gang responsible for distraction and sleight-of-hand thefts across these force areas. totalling more than £60,000. Using CCTV imagery provided by members and police partners, SaferGems identified four Romanian nationals (two males and two females) involved in the offences. SaferGems was able to provide confirmed identities, to police case officers linked to each offence location. Following some excellent and detailed intelligence work by our West Mercia Police SPOC, a suspect vehicle was identified and stopped by Hampshire Police resulting in arrests and the recovery of a significant quantity of cash and jewellery believed to be stolen.



Incidents of note



West Mercia Police: *"A Grey Vauxhall Insignia has been stopped by Hampshire. This vehicle was identified from intelligence work as a direct result of information from SaferGems in respect of offences in Thames Ditton on 31/07 and Cirencester on 01/08. A large amount of cash and jewellery was found in the vehicle by officers and a wanted male arrested with two of his associates. All 3 have been arrested by Hampshire Police".*

Two members of this organised crime group later went onto commit further distraction and sleight-of-hand offences in Gloucestershire, Sussex and South Wales. However, further intelligence work by West Mercia Police identified an additional vehicle being used by the group. This vehicle was stopped by South Wales Police on 26th September 2025, resulting in a further four arrests. A great example of partnership working between SaferGems and the UK Police.

November 2025

SaferGems assisted Police partners with the identification and arrest of two Irish males and four foreign nationals, including a Venezuelan couple linked to sleight-of-hand and distraction offences in Slough, Leicester and Birmingham.

Leicestershire Police highlighted the value of SaferGems' intelligence and investigative support, noting "SaferGems provides a highly effective intelligence and investigative support, a strong knowledge of cases and offenders. Their expertise consistently adds value to investigations by enabling links to be identified between offences across different areas up and down the country and even internationally, supporting a clear and comprehensive understanding of criminal activity nationwide. SaferGems capability plays a key role in linking crime both locally and across the country, helping to identify patterns, associations, and emerging trends that may otherwise go unnoticed on area. This contribution significantly strengthens investigative decision-making and supports more focused and efficient enquiries"

SaferGems also assisted Police partners with the identification and arrest of a Romanian male sought in connection with sleight-of-hand and distraction offences in Norwich, Glasgow, Cosham and Guildford between June and September 2025. On the 26th November 2025, the suspect entered a jewellery store in Torquay and requested to view a gold chain. Vigilant staff recognised the individual from a SaferGems alert and refused to allow access to the jewellery beyond looking at it. After the suspect left the premises, staff immediately contacted Devon & Cornwall Police, providing a detailed description. Shortly afterwards officers attended and arrested the suspects. Norfolk police later took custody of the suspects who were also sought in connection with an offence in Norwich on 8th November 2025 where the male was then remanded into custody.

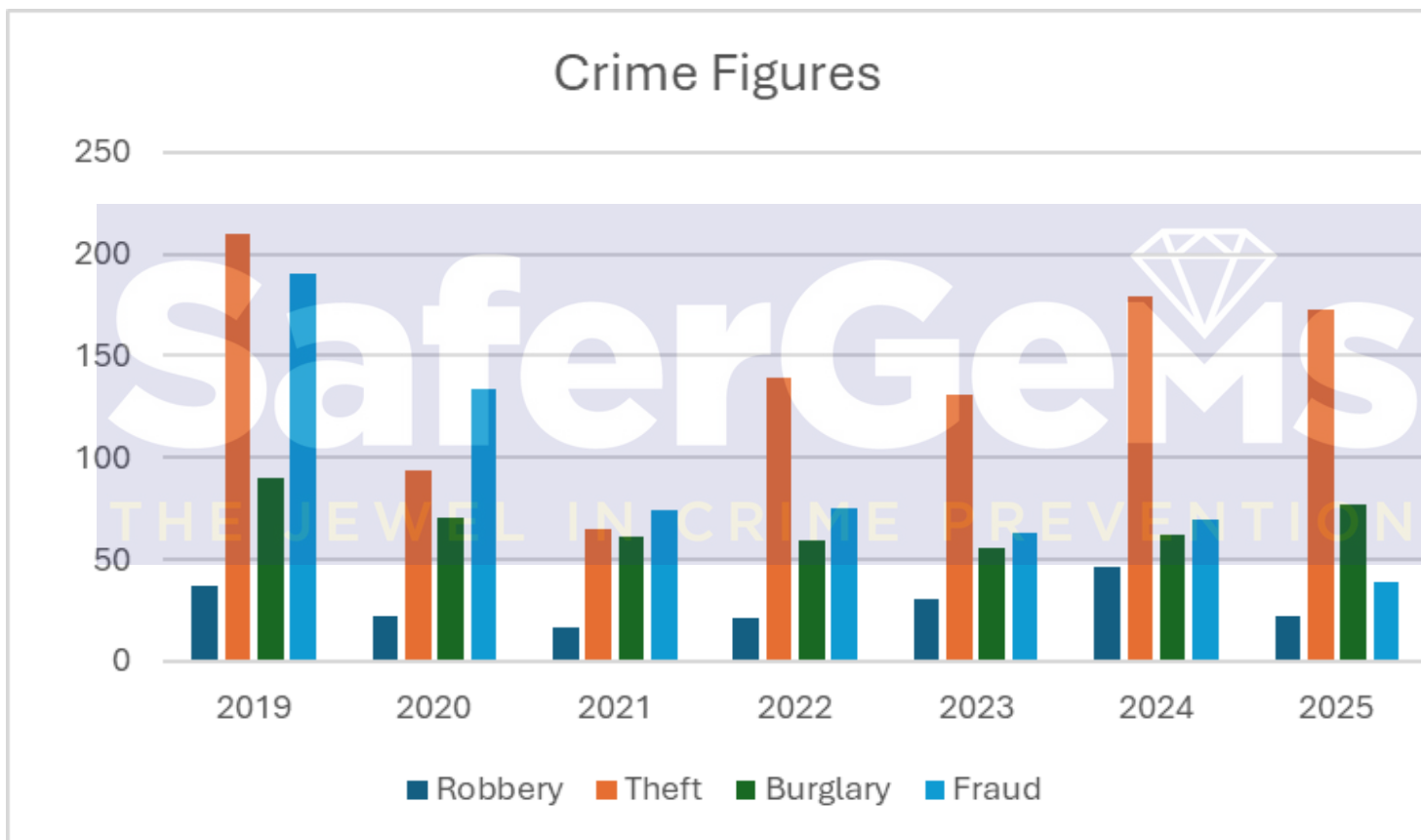
Incidents of note

Other highlights from November include SaferGems supporting West Mercia and Northamptonshire Police with the identification of two Irish males sought for high-value thefts and attempted thefts at stores in Hereford and Northampton. On 13th November 2025, the suspects were arrested in Gloucestershire by British Transport Police having attempted to steal £10,000 of gold bracelets from a store in Cheltenham. They were later sentenced to 12 months in prison.

December 2025

Traditionally one of the busiest months for the jewellery industry, and throughout the period SaferGems continued to support police partners in both the UK and United States. During the month, SaferGems assisted with the identification of 10 foreign national offenders responsible for distraction and sleight-of-hand thefts. This included a Romanian male sought by US Law Enforcement in connection with two thefts in Los Angeles, California and Nashville, Tennessee, with combined losses exceeding \$240,000.

December also saw a SaferGems member in Horsham, West Sussex successfully prevent a second courier fraud attempt at their store. An elderly gentleman entered the premises attempting to purchase a high-value gold Rolex watch. During the interaction, staff noticed the customer appeared vulnerable and unsettled. Due to staff training and awareness around courier fraud, concerns were quickly raised and police were contacted who safeguarded the victim.



Our Year in Events

In March, Head of SaferGems, Sarah Staff, appeared on BBC CrimeWatch Live in Cardiff to talk about organised crime affecting the jewellery industry. The feature showcased a Metropolitan Police Flying Squad operation which dismantled an organised crime group from South America committing high-value jewellery traders and bank follow-off thefts.



In case you missed it, you can see Sarah's CrimeWatch appearance [here](#).

In April, SaferGems was approached to support the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad and SaferCash members regarding an exhibition taking place at the Victoria & Albert Museum. In conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Arts and Antiques Unit Sarah delivered a presentation which focused on sleight of hand distraction crime being committed in London by South American Crime Groups.

In July, SaferGems, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service, hosted an online crime prevention webinar for members focused on courier fraud. The session provided practical guidance on identifying suspicious purchasing behaviour and outlined the serious and growing threat posed by organised fraud networks targeting jewellers and pawnbrokers. Offenders frequently coerce elderly and vulnerable individuals into purchasing high-value items, including gold and prestige watches, on their behalf before arranging collection through courier networks. The webinar also reinforced reporting procedures, shared recent case examples, and encouraged proactive engagement by members to help disrupt this form of exploitation and protect potential victims.

Courier Fraud Prompt Card

Is the purchase or transaction unusual for this customer?
(Customers targeted may be vulnerable, elderly, non-frank or upset)

Yes

Please ask the customer further questions, for example:

- Has anyone asked you to purchase this on their behalf?
- Has anyone phoned saying they're from your BANK or the POLICE?
- Have you had a call or been approached, claiming you have been a victim of fraud or offered an investment?
- Who? What is the purchase for?

Concerned?

- Alert a senior member of staff
- If possible, take the customer to a quiet area
- Provide reassurance and tactfully question further
- Is the suspect nearby or due to meet the customer soon?
- If YES call the Police via 999 quoting "Courier Fraud"
- If NO, but fraud suspected, report via Action Fraud - <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Action Fraud
Report from 0300 060 060

UKCA

SaferGems

The National Association of Jewellers

Our Year in Events

In October, Sarah was pleased to deliver a presentation at the National Pawnbrokers Association Conference in London, highlighting the key crime threats affecting the industry and emerging trends identified through SaferGems' intelligence work. She was joined by Detective Chief Inspector Scott Mather and Detective Sergeant Matt Holland from the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad, who delivered an engaging case study examining the covert policing operation connected to the 2015 Hatton Garden Safety Deposit burglary. The session provided delegates with valuable operational insight into investigative tactics, offender methodology, and lessons learned relevant to protecting high-value premises.

In October, the BBC released a documentary, "CrimeWatch Caught on Camera" and Sarah was again delighted to appear in this programme showcasing the partnership between SaferGems and the Flying Squad.

Rounding off the year, in November, Sarah was invited by the Metropolitan Police Service's Arts and Antiques Squad at the National History Museum in London to deliver a presentation to the London Museum Security Group. Sarah delivered an input on the SaferGems model and current threats, in turn, expanding the reputation of SaferGems to a wider audience.



Celebrating Our People and Partnerships

We are delighted to announce that in June 2025, UK Protection, a valued member of the BSIA, became the second affiliated sponsor of SaferGems. UK Protection is a leading specialist provider of luxury retail guarding, offering tailored security solutions for high-value premises. Andy Fairbanks, Managing Director of UK Protection said:

"Having worked closely with SaferGems for over ten years, I was only too pleased to support the initiative and become an affiliate sponsor, joining the Company of Master Jewellers. Working in partnership with SaferGems has yielded numerous arrests and convictions of dangerous offenders, from fraud to serious armed robbery. "I look forward to continuing our close relationship for the benefit of our clients and the wider Watch and Jewellery retail community. SaferGems has always been a valuable tool in combating crime, and we look forward to its continued success and expansion."

Simon Dawe, Managing Director of TH March and **Ben Massey, Chief Executive of the National Association of Jewellers** both welcomed UK Protection as an affiliated sponsor of SaferGems, highlighting that the partnership strengthens collective efforts to combat crime in the jewellery industry.

Celebrating Our People and Partnerships

Also, in June, the BSIA appointed Emily Haslam as the Administration and Communications Officer for SaferGems. Emily brings with her nine years' experience working within intelligence functions at West Mercia Police alongside earlier experience as a paralegal. Her background provides a strong foundation in information handling, analysis and stakeholder communication, all of which support the ongoing development of SaferGems' intelligence and member engagement activities. Emily's skills and professional experience make her a valuable addition to the BSIA and SaferGems team. One of Emily's main responsibilities is membership updates and enquiries so you will no doubt hear from her at some point throughout your membership.

In October, Lee Henderson's longstanding contribution to the jewellery industry was formally recognised at the National Association of Jewellers Annual Awards, where he received the 'Unsung Hero' accolade. Lee has served as National Intelligence Officer for SaferGems since the initiative was launched in 2009, providing tireless support to both the industry and UK law enforcement partners. The BSIA was delighted to see his dedication acknowledged through this thoroughly well-deserved honour, which reflects Lee's professionalism, commitment and ongoing work to keep the jewellery industry safe.



Testimonials

Simon Dawe, TH March Insurance Brokers: SaferGems – and its highly effective team – has continued to play a central role in enhancing the safety and security of the jewellery trade, which helps businesses better protect their people, premises, and livelihoods. The collaboration between the NAJ, TH March, law enforcement, and the trade itself has once again proven to be essential, and the continued success of SaferGems reinforces the value of a coordinated, intelligence-led approach to tackling crime within the sector. The support of the CMJ and UK Protection Ltd is also greatly appreciated, as it ensures the scheme can continue to grow and develop for the benefit of its membership.

Ben Massey, National Association of Jewellers CEO: SaferGems plays a vital role in protecting NAJ members and the wider jewellery community. Its importance and impact continue to grow, providing timely, actionable intelligence that supports both member businesses and law enforcement. The SaferGems team works tirelessly to safeguard people, premises, and customers, and we are proud to support the team, as well as the scheme more broadly.

Patrick Turner, The Company of Master Jewellers: CMJ values partnerships that create real-world impact, and our collaboration with SaferGems does exactly that. SaferGems provides powerful tools and insights that enhance safety awareness while supporting our commitment to quality and integrity. We're excited to continue growing this partnership and expanding its positive reach.

Andrew Fairbanks Chief Executive of UK Protection: At UK Protection Ltd, we are proud to be an affiliate sponsor of SaferGems and to support the important work the organisation carries out across the UK jewellery, watch, and luxury retail sectors. Although we have been an official affiliate sponsor for the past year, our working relationship with SaferGems and the wider industry spans more than a decade. Throughout that time, we have seen first-hand the value that the SaferGems intelligence network provides to retailers, security professionals, and law enforcement agencies in combating organised criminal activity targeting the luxury goods sector. The intelligence alerts, incident reporting, and analytical insight distributed by SaferGems are invaluable in helping businesses stay informed about emerging threats and evolving criminal tactics. This information allows security providers like UK Protection to brief officers effectively, implement targeted risk mitigation measures, and support our clients with proactive security strategies. The collaborative approach fostered by SaferGems—bringing together retailers, security professionals, and police forces—plays a critical role in strengthening the resilience of the sector and improving the collective response to crime. We are delighted to support SaferGems as an affiliate sponsor and remain committed to working alongside the organisation to help protect the UK's jewellery and luxury retail industry.

SaferGems: meet the team



Sarah Staff

SaferGems Manager
Sarah@safergems.org.uk

Sarah is responsible for the **BSIA** joint security intelligence initiative **SaferCash** as well as manager for **SaferGems**. Sarah is former Head of the Flying Squad, with a 30 year career in the Metropolitan Police.



Lee Henderson

Intelligence Analyst
[inteleasafergems.org.uk](mailto:intelesafergems.org.uk)

Lee joined **West Mercia Force Intelligence Bureau** in 1998 as a researcher before working on the Cheque & Credit Card Fraud desk. Went on to become a Source Co-ordinator (office manager) for the FIB acting as a central point of contact for the bureau, evaluating, collating and disseminating intelligence at national and international levels. In 2008, Lee joined the **BSIA** as an intelligence officer for **SaferCash** before moving over to SaferGems in 2010.

About the BSIA

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) is the trade association for the professional security industry in the UK.

Our members are responsible for more than 70% of privately provided UK security products and services (by turnover) including the manufacture, distribution and installation of electronic and physical security equipment and the provision of security officer and consultancy services.

The BSIA is the recognised voice of the professional security industry, supporting and encouraging excellence; educating the marketplace on the value of quality and professional security; and creating an environment in which to flourish.

BSIA Membership is the symbol of quality and professionalism in the security industry.

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