

International Security Expo 2022 Round Up

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Earlier this week the National Counter Terrorism Security Office spent two days at the International Security Expo.

Over the two days the team heard from fantastic speakers with strong experience in the world of security, spoke directly to users of ProtectUK and gained feedback on the progress they have made since launching.

In 2021 the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) ProtectUK team first discussed the release of the ProtectUK platform to the public.

The Head of NaCTSO, Adam Thomson, stood on stage at that time and discussed the importance of private and public sector collaboration, and how developing individuals into counter terrorism (CT) citizens is key to reducing terrorist threats.

This year the ProtectUK platform, which launched in March 2022, played a prominent role at the expo, with reference made across many of the speeches delivered in the main hall. When entering the International Security Expo this year, it was evident that there was a renewed interest, reflected in increased footfall when compared to the previous year. At the NaCTSO stand, shared with the Home Office and the Joint Security and Resilience Centre (JSaRC), the ProtectUK platform and app were showcased widely to businesses, government officials from all over the globe, and many other interested parties.

Various other NaCTSO units were present to discuss ProtectUK and other key projects that have been in development. The Product, Research and Development Unit shared insights into academic studies that are being progressed, while the Business Engagement Unit supported visitors to sign up to the ProtectUK platform.



On the main stage of the conference we heard from prominent figures in the world of Security. Director of Protect and Prepare at the Home Office, Shaun Hipgrave, shared how the context of the threat to the UK has changed over the last 12 months since the war in Ukraine and the ongoing impact of the economic crisis. He also covered key areas such as:

- The refresh of Crowded Places
- How businesses are already improving security measures
- How the threat has continued to evolve with diverse means being used such as cyber, conventional and niche threats

Closing his speech we heard about the Protect Duty, noting that there is no defined date for its announcement and that the government is working tirelessly to progress the legislation. Attendees were encouraged to visit and engage with ProtectUK as this will be a key resource to support individuals and organisations to ready themselves in the case of a legislation being enacted.

Attendees also heard from the new Security Minister who gave an overview on Operation London Bridge and how important it is to continuously prepare against potential threats that the nation faces.

Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Specialist Operations, Matt Twist, reflected on the changes that have occurred over the last year, with the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a change in Prime Minister, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the proclamation of our new King. The speech covered the importance of unity and how collaboration has brought people together and provided vital support.

There was a forward look to the next 12 to 24 months, and a look back at the 32 attack plots foiled since 2017. Giving insight into the world of Counter Terrorism, Matt Twist discussed how radicalisation online has been increasing and has been amplified due to isolation of individuals during the lockdown periods over the last two years. The importance of the ACT Early programme was highlighted in helping to respond to this issue, with regular campaigns from Counter Terrorism Policing encouraging people to ACT Early if they see anything of concern.

Following Matt Twist, Head of NaCTSO, Adam Thomson gave insight into the world of NaCTSO and its evolution to support counter terrorism operational drivers for change. Covering the importance of Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs), initial concepts and ideas, and potential benefits of a Competent Persons Scheme. He also provided insight into the evaluation work that has been recently undertaken.

Each year the International Security Expo brings interesting speakers from across the industry together to share stories and highlight progress. We were lucky to also hear from Figen Murray, the leading advocate for Martyn's Law, who openly shared her personal journey in relation to the Protect Duty. Her drive for a Protect Duty is admirable, and is one that has and will continue to support change in how counter terrorism is delivered for years to come.



Image from International Security Expo - <https://www.internationalsecurityexpo.com/visit>

In another area of the conference we heard from Founder and Director of Risk to Resolution, Nick Aldworth, who covered the importance of our award winning ACT Awareness e-Learning and how it should be considered as a baseline for all. He talked about the importance of demystifying terrorism and making it easier to understand. Giving insight into his own personal journey, he shared the experience of delivering trauma kits to Ukraine and signposted ProtectUK as a key resource for further information.

Throughout the second half of the day we heard about bridging gaps between the public and private sector security approaches. JSaRC described their current approach and focus on delivering clear outcomes.

Other speakers during the expo looked at the global outlook on security and the evolution of different threat types. Speakers were interspersed between stands, giving ample opportunity for many to network and learn about the innovations being developed. The ProtectUK team benefited directly from delegates providing feedback on the platform, which was overwhelmingly positive, whilst learning about suggestions to improve the platform and increase support to their respective industries.

The International Security Expo continues to be a great event that to provide opportunities for learning, development and sharing. The ProtectUK team would like to thank the organisers for the

opportunity to amplify their messages and look forward to being involved next year.

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