

RJ/KL/NSI 030 20

16 July 2020

**To: All NSI Approved Companies and applicants**

Dear Colleague,

**AS LOCKDOWN EASES – THE NSI PERSPECTIVE**

We and you have a common interest, as lockdown measures are easing, in ensuring NSI Certification continues to be recognised for its integrity in calling out to buyers the professionalism and competency of NSI Approved Companies.

One thing is clear: industry and commerce want more than anything else to get on with business whilst hoping - as we all do - the beginning of the end of the pandemic is in sight.

It's also clear to us that stakeholders and buyers rightly expect holders of NSI Approval to be transparent in delivering a robust service, underpinned by NSI scrutiny, without compromise, even as the pandemic is on the wane.

**Blended Audit Programmes**

That's why, whilst emphasising to NSI staff the importance of respecting government guidance in this 'Stay Alert' phase of the crisis, we are committed to on-site audits where it is safe for all parties to do so, and remote audits - now a routine element of our auditors' tool kit for QMS audits - where appropriate. We're calling it our 'blended' approach to auditing. We are convinced with the right blend comes the best outcome for buyers of security services, for stakeholders, and most of all for the professional approved industry.

Without on-site verification and evidence gathering of service delivery, the audit jigsaw remains incomplete, something we believe strongly underscores NSI Approvals. PSM carried an article on the topic in June :

<https://www.professionalsecurity.co.uk/news/interviews/covid-19-pandemic/>

## NSI's holistic approach

We triggered NSI's own 'Extraordinary Event' procedure in late March. Looking at the big picture, it was clear to us that temporarily suspending audit activity would give affected Approved Companies space to adjust to the lockdown, help them to focus on the health and wellbeing of staff and support their customers - without NSI audits and auditors in the mix!

We applied a universal and automatic extension of Certification for those whose expiry dates fell in April, May and June. However, virtually all businesses now want to return to 'normal' with their audits and Certification, just as they do with all the other aspects of their business.

It's our job to deliver audit programmes completely and robustly, and it's been hugely encouraging that Approved Companies are setting themselves up for exactly that, even in July and August as lockdown begins to ease. As it happens, NSI too is facing its own re-accreditation audit by UKAS in July, which will proceed as usual.

## So, what next?

The world hasn't stopped; buyers continue to seek out added value quality in the security sector; new and evolving demands are creating opportunity for those with foresight; and the value of Certification as a key differentiator in the market is not diminished: not, at any rate, if the new applications received during the last three months at NSI is anything to go by.

In all our key specialisms of Guarding, Fire Safety and Security Systems, standards are evolving. New developments will be shared further in the coming weeks and months. Our team has been progressing these throughout the pandemic period, working with stakeholders and BSI Committees, offering our perspective on evolving industry and market needs.

## In the first instance

Our primary focus is to support Approved Companies getting back on track with their scheduled audit programmes, given the lockdown disruption from which virtually no one has escaped.

Your auditor will be liaising with you, if not already, as we move through the summer months, to ensure your particular programme is well set, and audits booked.

We are promoting the readiness of NSI Approved Companies in adhering to their audit programmes as good reason for continued confidence in NSI approval by stakeholders and buyers alike. Your action in working with us to keep your programme of audits on track is key, is truly wholly appreciated, and reinforces the NSI message.



If you have specific questions regarding your audit programme, please connect with your NSI auditor in the first instance. In the meantime, best wishes as you move toward your own 'new normal' modus operandi in the coming months.

Stay Safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Richard Jenkins'.

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