

Your questions answered ACS Standard

General

Question	Answer
<p>What are the changes to the ACS as a result of this review?</p>	<p>The key areas of change are on the standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on service delivery. • Seven criteria rather than the previous nine • Clarifying language and adding some additional detail to tighten the Standard • New Self-Assessment Workbook - made clearer and easier to navigate. We have made it easier to use. The number of criteria has gone down from 87 to 78. We are developing an online interactive version with combined guidance in due course. We provide them with an additional explanation as to the contents and requirements of the new ACS Standard. <p>We have revised the eligibility criteria and ‘fit and proper ‘conditions and this is incorporated in ‘Get Approved’ to ensure only sound, sustainable and credible companies are able to join the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More stringent requirements to ensure only sound, sustainable and credible companies are able to join the scheme. • This enhanced scrutiny will give clients and enforcement partners the assurance that they are working with some of the best run businesses within the industry. • We are revising our approach to how we market the scheme, and provide support for businesses • Ensure businesses are better supported during the application process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to those businesses already in the scheme to drive their operational improvement. • Support approved contractors using our Licence Assist and Licence Management services.
How does this benefit approved contractors?	<p>This review cements the reputation of the ACS as a well-supported and respected scheme.</p> <p>The emphasis is now on service delivery rather than processes and will help businesses to drive improvement that further mitigate the risks and threats to customer assets.</p> <p>The revised ACS has been endorsed publicly by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), giving a clear steer to buyers that approved contractors are preferred by police forces.</p>
How will the changes affect my business financially?	<p>We have opted not to alter the fee structure at this time and the existing headcount model will remain in place.</p> <p>Fee calculation will be reviewed as a standalone area in the future along with other proposed models e.g. revenue based or headcount based on full time equivalent.</p>
When will Get Approved and the latest version of the Self-Assessment Workbook be available on the website?	<p>The latest version of ACS Standard is now available on our website.</p> <p>Get Approved is now available on our website.</p>
We have been told that all the work done on the online workbook so far is likely to be a waste of time. I can find no warnings about this on the SIA website.	<p>This is not true. It is true that you cannot remove any of your scores from the Online Achievement Record as it has been altered to match the new standard.</p>
We have been told that we will have to pay for a full review again this year having already paid for one last year is this true?	<p>Yes this is the case so that your business will meet the standard. The relevant ACS assessment year for your business will revert back during the 2020-21 assessment cycle.</p>
I want to apply to join the ACS. I understand that the process is lengthy to become an approved contractor.	<p>It is not a lengthy process. We have made available a customer journey for your business to follow to help your business with the application process.</p>

<p>Will these new changes slow down or increase the time it takes to grant an approval?</p>	<p>We have adopted a number of changes to simplify and streamline the standard with a clearer focus on service delivery. We have improved the supporting documentation and updated the guidance material to make them more accessible and will create an online interactive guide to make the Self-Assessment Workbook easier to navigate.</p>
<p>I am an Approved Contractor, I have one current contract for 12 months and one security operative; will I lose my ACS approval?</p>	<p>The ACS eligibility criteria requires you to be a business that supplies <u>at least 2 licensable operatives</u> under a contract for security industry services. If you do not meet this requirement, then you will not be eligible for the ACS. If you do not meet the new requirements, there is a risk that you may lose your approval. In exceptional circumstances, we have the discretion to allow temporary deviation to ACS requirements for example in unforeseen circumstances. However, failure to plan and prepare in good time would not be considered unforeseen. Please refer to our exceptional circumstances policy on the SIA website.</p>
<p>Do these changes favour the larger businesses in the scheme?</p>	<p>The changes we have made are of benefit to all approved contractors regardless of their size.</p>
<p>Can I still renew and reregister ACS membership by post?</p>	<p>No. We no longer accept postal applications for new ACS applications or reregistration and renewal. You must set up a STeP online account. Our customer journey document will help you navigate quickly to get your application form in.</p>
<p>You have left it very late to share the detail of the ACS Review haven't you?</p>	<p>We did communicate the changes last September and we have sent a number of reminders to approved contractors explaining the changes. All of the information that you need to know is available on our website.</p>
<p>My business uses Licence Dispensation Notices. Are there any changes to our way of working as a result of the Review?</p>	<p>Your employee doing the Licence Dispensation Notice training is required to refresh their knowledge by repeating the course and doing the test every three years.</p>

I understand that if my business applies to become an approved contractor that I may receive a pre-approval interview?

Yes this is correct. It is part of our due diligence checks before your business becomes approved.

Standard

Question	Answer
<p>The new indicators in the ACS standard extensively refer to the business' responsibility to conduct regular reviews of internal processes and procedures. Define "Regularly Review"? Can twice a year review be considered as regular?</p> <p>Sub Indicator 1.5.1 states <i>the organisation regularly reviews performance against success factors and performance indicators</i>, and requires that performance ...,...is regularly reviewed.. What is meant by <i>regular</i>?</p>	<p>We do not define 'regular' as the need for review varies from organisation to organisation depending on factors such as size, location and service type. However, you will need to determine the frequency of review that provides you with assurance that your business is meeting its goals, objectives and critical success factors. For some businesses this may be monthly or quarterly, for others this may be daily.</p>
<p>Can I now use the Online Achievement Record to input my scores against the new Standard?</p>	<p>Yes you can.</p>
<p>I had my ACS assessment in June 2018 and I am due to have the next assessment in June 2019, what do I need to do?</p>	<p>Prior to April 2019, when the new standard comes into effect, you must ensure that you plan and prepare, and where required, update your organisational processes and procedures, to ensure that you are meeting our requirements from April 2019. You will be required to do a full assessment again in June 2019.</p>
<p>What is going to happen if I cannot make the required changes?</p>	<p>You must be able to demonstrate that you meet the ACS Standard at all times. When the new standard requirements become mandatory from April 2019, you must be able to demonstrate that you meet all of the new requirements. If not, there is a risk that you may lose your approval.</p>

SAW

Question	Answer
Our consultant completes the SAW prior to the assessment. How is this new indicator 7.1.2 going to affect managers/directors?	Regardless of who completes the online achievement record against the SAW, all managers and directors, or people with significant control, who are responsible for processes and key personnel; must be able to demonstrate their understanding of the procedures and practice within their remit of responsibility.

Eligibility

Question	Answer
What are the changes to the ACS standard and the eligibility criteria?	A summary of the most significant changes to the ACS eligibility criteria include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All individuals supplied by the business are employees, except where there is a valid reason why this is not appropriate. This is intended to protect both the Exchequer and the workforce, while helping to provide a level field of competition between approved contractors;• Whether your business is tax compliant• You have been supplying security industry services for at least 12 months at the time of application• Your business supplies at least two SIA licensed operatives under a contract for services.
What happens if my assessment is due in March?	If you are assessed prior to April 2019, the new requirements will not apply. From April 2019, you will need to arrange a full assessment with your assessment body to ensure that your business is compliant with the Standard. Your ACS assessor will raise any non-conformance

	with the new requirements as Improvement Needs, and you will be required to address these within six weeks.
My business model is based on more self-employed contractors, than PAYE employees. How is the new eligibility criteria going to affect me?	All individuals supplied by a business should be employees, except where there is a valid reason why this is not appropriate. This is intended to protect both the Exchequer and the workforce, whilst helping to provide a level field of competition between approved contractors.
I have/had a few short-term and rolling contracts, the combined length of these contracts is 12 months. I don't have a single contract for 12 months, but, I have been supplying security industry services for at least 12 months at the time of the application, am I eligible?	You are eligible to apply for ACS and we will make our decision in line with SIA processes and procedures.
How long do I have to implement the new changes in the ACS standards and the eligibility criteria to ensure compliance?	We have published a refreshed ACS standard. The new standard requirements are effective from Monday 1 April 2019. All approved contractors are reminded of the need to adhere to ACS terms and conditions, particularly 2.2.1: <i>The approved contractor must ensure that ACS standards and eligibility criteria are met throughout the Approval Period.</i> Approved contractors are advised that at the earliest opportunity they should undertake a full business review and make any changes to ensure on-going conformance to requirements.
As a micro (small business), what if I cannot afford to pay for a second security operative to meet the new eligibility criteria?	If you are unable to meet this criteria, then you will not be eligible for the ACS.
This will cost my business is there any compensation?	No you will need to fund this new assessment.
If I am an applicant and I don't make the criteria what are the exceptions where I may be granted ACS status?	There are only two exceptions surrounding dog handling and close protection.