



The threat level is severe

What it means for event security this winter

What SEVERE means and does not mean, the free official winter guidance, when the duties of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) start, and what to do at every level

OTAS Insight SC-001 | All levels: Operational • Tactical • Strategic

Correct as of 20 October 2026 | United Kingdom | Not security advice | otas.live/insights/



The short version: SEVERE, and what to do about it this winter

The level

SEVERE since 30 April 2026

- An attack is highly likely
- Raised from SUBSTANTIAL by JTAC
- Still SEVERE on 20 October 2026
- Covers the whole UK

What it is not

Not about your event

- A national judgement, kept under review
- Not a reason on its own to cancel
- MI5: a change does not by itself require a specific response
- Vigilance matters at every level

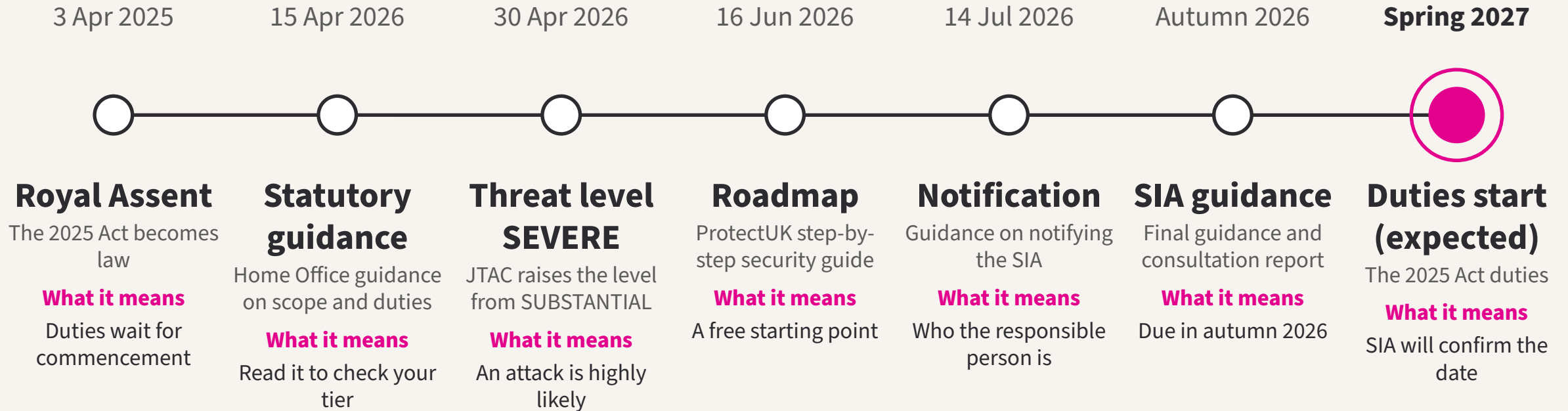
What to do

Review, brief, report

- Review your security risk assessment
- Brief every shift on reporting and response
- Use the free winter campaign materials

Whole of the UK. General information, not security advice. No detail about any site.

The dates that matter: 2025 to spring 2027



The threat level has no set expiry date. The start date for the 2025 Act duties is expected, not confirmed. Check MI5 and the SIA before each event.

What SEVERE means, and what it does not mean

01 • Means

Highly likely

An attack in the UK is highly likely
JTAC judgement since 30 April 2026

02 • Covers

The whole UK

All forms of terrorism, apart from Northern
Ireland-related terrorism in Northern Ireland
That separate level is SUBSTANTIAL

03 • Is not

About your event

A national judgement, not a warning about a
particular event
Use your own risk assessment

04 • Is not

A trigger by itself

MI5: a change does not necessarily require a
specific response
Review plans. Do not react blindly

05 • Always

Vigilance

MI5: vigilance is vital whatever the level
Brief every team on reporting

06 • Changes

Kept under review

No set expiry date. JTAC reviews it regularly
Check MI5 before each event

The five levels: LOW, MODERATE, SUBSTANTIAL, SEVERE, CRITICAL. Source: MI5, 20 October 2026.

Winter: the free campaign for events

- **One message** If you see something that does not feel right, report it.
- **Free materials** Posters, screen and social media images and video, website text and audio announcements.
- **Made for winter** Versions for Christmas markets, ice rinks and festive lights, and in Welsh.
- **For your staff** Guidance for staff and volunteers, and the free ACT Awareness e-learning.
- **A deterrent** Counter Terrorism Policing calls it a free extra layer of protective security.
- **Along the journey** Use it from arrival to departure, in queues, on screens and in staff areas.

Where it shows up at events

Arrival and queues posters and screens where people wait

Public address the audio announcements

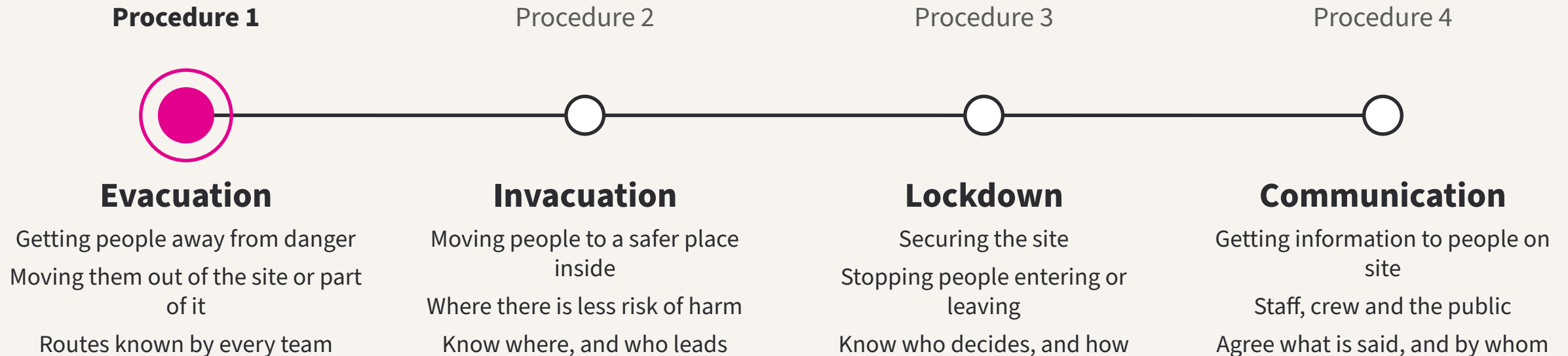
Website and tickets the website messaging

Staff areas posters and briefings for crew

The point

Clear, visible messages help the public to report, and reassure them.

Four procedures to have ready now, before the duties start



Duties not in force yet: the SIA expects them in spring 2027. Until then, these procedures are good practice, not a legal duty under it.

800: the number that will make an event a qualifying event

800

or more people expected at the same time, staff included, at a public event with entry checks: a qualifying event under the 2025 Act.

Standard tier. Premises where 200 to 799 people may be present: notify the SIA and have public protection procedures.

Enhanced tier. Also public protection measures: monitoring, movement, physical security and security of information.

Documented. Enhanced tier and qualifying events must document the procedures and measures and send them to the SIA.

Reasonably practicable. What can be done, weighed against cost, time and difficulty.

Qualifying events will have the same duties as enhanced tier premises. Duties expected to start in spring 2027.

Operational: what stewards, security and crew can do

- **Report it straight away** Anything that does not feel right: tell your supervisor or event control.
- **Do not confront** Do not challenge or follow anyone you are worried about. Report it instead.
- **Note the facts** What you saw, where, when, and what the person or item looked like.
- **Know RUN HIDE TELL** The official guidance for the public in a firearms or weapons attack.
- **Know your part** Your role in evacuation, invacuation and lockdown, as briefed.
- **Keep it off social media** No posts about security arrangements, posts or procedures.

Whose job it is

Spotting and reporting is everyone's job. Deciding what to do is for event control.

What to expect

- A briefing every shift
- A clear way to report
- Free ACT Awareness e-learning
- Instructions from event control
- Reporting outside work? Use the ACT page online

In an emergency, always call the emergency services.

Tactical: what event, safety and security leads put in place

01

Brief every shift

How to report concerns, and the response procedures for this site

Keep: briefing notes, signed attendance

02

Use the campaign

Winter materials across the visitor journey and in staff areas

Keep: where each item went, and when

03

Walk the procedures

Evacuation, invacuation, lockdown and communication, with the teams who use them

Keep: walk-through notes

04

Review the risk assessment

Against SEVERE, using the official threat information and the ProtectUK roadmap

Keep: version and date

05

Reach every team

Late starters, new crew, volunteers and contractors get the same briefing

Keep: who was briefed

06

Need to know

Brief teams without publishing security details

Keep: who holds the plan

Three levels: Operational for crew on the ground, Tactical for event and safety leads, Strategic for organisers and directors.

Strategic: what organisers and directors decide and fund

Step	What it looks like	Evidence to keep
Review since 30 April	Security risk assessment and plans reviewed against SEVERE	Dated review record
Decide in proportion	Measures match your own risk assessment, not the national level alone	Decision log with reasons
Fund the people	Briefing time and ACT Awareness e-learning for staff and volunteers	Budget and training records
Use the free guidance	ProtectUK roadmap, NPSA guidance, winter campaign materials	Notes of what was used
Check 2025 Act scope	Will your premises or events be in scope, and at which tier?	Scope note with headcount method
Name who is responsible	Who will be the responsible person, and who notifies the SIA	Named person and deputy
Stay informed	MI5 threat level alert feed and SIA updates	Subscriptions set up
Protect information	Security plans shared on a need-to-know basis	Distribution list

Not a legal standard or a complete list: what is proportionate for a large winter festival differs from a small market.

What we don't know yet: 6 open points

01 • Under review

How long SEVERE lasts

Threat levels have no set expiry date

Now: check MI5 before each event

02 • Expected

Expected start of the duties

The SIA expects spring 2027 and will confirm the date

Now: use this winter to prepare

03 • Due

SIA final guidance

Due in autumn 2026, with a consultation report

Now: read the Home Office guidance

04 • Your call

Risk at your event

Depends on your own risk assessment

Now: review it and record why

05 • Not public

Specific threats

Intelligence is not published

Now: follow official advice only

06 • Changes

Campaign materials

Toolkits are updated by Counter Terrorism Policing

Now: download the current set

Open on 20 October 2026. This deck gives no view on any particular event or place.



Supporting Events
and Professionals
at every stage

Work with OTAS

Is your winter event security plan up to date for a SEVERE threat level?

Request a call with OTAS to discuss how we can help

Get new Insights

Get free notifications at otas.live/insights/, or follow @otaslive on X.

Errors are corrected openly, on every format, and logged with the date.

Key sources: Home Office (30 April 2026); MI5 threat levels; ProtectUK threat levels, winter toolkit, RUN HIDE TELL and roadmap; ACT reporting; SIA Martyn's Law guidance; the 2025 Act

Spotted an error? Tell us using the contact details on the OTAS Insights page.

General information, not security advice. Correct as of 20 October 2026. Whole of the UK.

OTAS Insights | Event Professionals Global News | otas.live/insights/



Briefing card • about 1 minute

“Before we start: the UK threat level is SEVERE. That is a national judgement, not a warning about tonight, but it means we all stay alert.

If you see something or someone that does not feel right, do not confront them. Tell your supervisor or event control straight away, with what you saw, where and when.

Supervisor: _____ **Call sign:** _____

Event control: _____ **Meeting point:** _____

If you are told to move people out, keep them in or hold the doors, follow event control and help the public to do the same. If there is an attack, remember RUN HIDE TELL. Do not post about our security online. Any questions?”

Read at every pre-shift briefing. Fill in the blanks first.

Before the doors open: the checklist, by level

Operational know how to report; know RUN HIDE TELL and your part in the procedures; keep security details off social media.

Tactical brief every shift; place the winter campaign materials; walk through the four procedures; review the risk assessment.

Strategic record the review since 30 April 2026; resource in proportion; fund training; check 2025 Act scope and the responsible person.