

COUNCILS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

One duty, repeated across every building you hold

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 across the buildings a council holds, and how to reach a consistent position at every qualifying premises before commencement.

THE DUTY

The same question, at every building you hold

The Act received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025. The duties at sections 5 to 10 fall on the responsible person for the premises or the event, and the Security Industry Authority regulates compliance. Commencement is expected in spring 2027.

For a council that lands in several places at once. Leisure centres, libraries, town halls, theatres, museums, community centres, sports pavilions and visitor centres are premises the council itself holds. Markets, festivals, firework displays, light switch-ons and civic events are events the council itself runs. Alongside those, the Safety Advisory Group sees plans from organisers who are responsible persons in their own right, and licensing sees the venues.

Most of the premises a council holds will sit at standard duty. A handful of larger venues, and some events, will reach enhanced duty. Both tiers have to be answered, and the tier determination itself has to be recorded and defensible.

What makes it expensive is the repetition

The cost of this duty for a council is rarely the work at any single building. It is doing that work eighty times, to a different standard each time, because a leisure centre manager and a library manager each answered the question in their own way on their own spreadsheet.

When a member asks at scrutiny how the authority stands, the answer needs to be one position across every building rather than eighty positions of unknown quality. When the regulator arrives after commencement, the record needs to show what was assessed, when, against what, and what was found.

Why the record matters as much as the answer

Section 27(5) of the Act provides that proof of having acted in accordance with the statutory guidance may be relied on as tending to establish that no contravention occurred. A dated record of what was in place at each premises, made against a published control set before the duty commenced, is that kind of proof. It is worth having whether or not the answer at every building was a good one.

PUT SIMPLY

Eighty buildings answered eighty ways is a folder. Eighty buildings answered one way is a position the authority can stand behind.

WORKING WITH WESTMARK

Licence the tool across the portfolio. Commission assessment where it counts.

ROUTE	WHAT IT IS	WHERE IT FITS
Licence the assessment tool	Your own officers assess your own premises, in the same tool Westmark assessors use, against the same twenty controls. One annual licence for the authority, banded by the number of premises you hold.	Every building you hold. It is how you reach a consistent position across all of them without paying an assessment fee at each one.
Commission an assessment	A Westmark assessor carries out an enhanced premises assessment, a qualifying event assessment or a standard premises declaration, and a positive outcome goes on the public register.	The flagship venues and the large events, where the council wants a judgement made by somebody with no stake in the answer.

Most authorities will want both. Licence the tool across the portfolio, and commission assessment at the few places where independent standing is worth paying for.

How the licence fee works

One annual licence for the authority, banded by the number of premises you hold that are likely to qualify. The band covers every officer who needs an account and every building you choose to assess. There is no per-premises charge and no per-seat charge inside a band.

BAND	QUALIFYING PREMISES HELD	TYPICALLY
Band A	Up to 25	A smaller authority, or a single directorate taking it on first
Band B	26 to 75	Most district and unitary authorities
Band C	76 to 200	A large unitary or county authority with leisure and culture in-house
Band D	Over 200	A combined authority, or a group of authorities licensing together

The fee for your band is quoted in writing before anything is signed, and it does not move during the licence year. Where several neighbouring authorities want to licence together, that is quoted as one arrangement.

WHAT YOU GET

Everything an officer needs to assess a building properly

- **The assessment tool itself**, the same one a Westmark assessor works in, licensed to the authority and opened by your officers under their own accounts.
- **Unlimited premises**. Assess as many buildings as you hold. Nothing in the licence counts them.
- **The published standard and control set in full**, so an officer can read what a control asks before answering it rather than guessing at the intent.
- **A dated record per premises**, held against the version of the standard it was carried out under, and exportable for the corporate risk register or a scrutiny paper.
- **Officer training**, run against your own buildings rather than a worked example.
- **A calibration session**, so two officers reach the same answer on the same evidence. That is the part which makes a portfolio-wide position mean anything.
- **Updates as the standard moves**, including the changes that follow the Security Industry Authority guidance under section 12 of the Act.
- **A named contact at Westmark** for the questions that arise once officers are using it in anger rather than in training.

What a licence does not do

Using the tool does not discharge the duty and it does not make the authority compliant. Westmark is not an accredited certification body, the tool carries no approval by the Security Industry Authority or the Home Office, and an assessment your own officers carry out is your own work rather than an independent judgement. No mark may be shown on a building the authority assessed itself.

What it gives you is a consistent method, a published control set to work against, and a dated record of what you assessed and what you found.

Your records stay yours

Records made under a licence belong to the authority. They are never published, never shown to another licensee, and never used as evidence in a Westmark assessment unless you produce them yourself. Everything can be exported before a licence ends, in a form you can keep and read without the tool.

NOBODY ELSE SEES THEM

Records made by your officers under a licence are the authority's own. Westmark does not read them, publish them or share them.

NEXT STEPS

Half an hour now, or eighty spreadsheets later

- 1 Tell us roughly how many premises you hold**
An approximate number of premises likely to qualify, and roughly how many you expect to reach enhanced duty. That is enough to place you in a band.
- 2 See it run against one of your own buildings**
Half an hour, online or in the room, with the officers who would use it. No fee, and nothing to sign afterwards.
- 3 Licence and train**
The licence runs for a year from issue. Officer training and the calibration session are arranged in the same window.
- 4 Work through the buildings at your own pace**
The position across the portfolio is visible from the first building onwards, so a scrutiny paper does not have to wait for the last one.

If it does not fit, say so

Where a demonstration shows the tool does not suit how your officers work, that is the end of it. Half an hour is a better place to find that out than a signed licence.

Talk to us

Tell us roughly how many premises the authority holds and we will come back with a band, a fee and a date to show you the tool.

hello@westmarkassurance.co.uk · 033 33 356 873

1st Floor, 2 West Regent Street, Glasgow, G2 1RW

Verify any outcome at hub.westmarkassurance.co.uk/verify

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