Prince William, the Duchess of Cambridge and their new born baby daughter, Princess Charlotte as they leave St.Marys Hospital, May 2015.

From new royal babies to general elections - security planning for public events is key

There have been some very high-profile and special public events in the UK this year. From ITV's Leaders' Debate, to the General Election, to the homecoming of a very special Princess, each of these notable events created its very own unique security requirements.

Managing these types of events can be challenging in their nature as there is usually a massive public interest as well as a media frenzy to contend with. Planning the security requirements for a special event requires a bespoke approach that balances effective, non-intrusive security measures against a realistic assessment of the likely threats. A "one size fits all" approach to security fails to consider the very aspects of the event that make it unique.

Ten steps to a successful public event

1. Ensure you have a strong event management structure in place with a qualified and experienced leader who will take overall responsibility for the successful delivery of the project. Managing the strategic direction of complex events requires leaders who not only provide a sense of direction, but who can also build ownership and alignment within the project team to ensure tactical and operational success.

2. Attend an initial meeting with relevant parties to discuss the scope of service required. Gather all the information required in order to carry out an early and comprehensive risk assessment.

3. Ensure relevant authorities (police, local council etc.) are aware of the event and factor in any police support required. Plan any road closures with these parties and public transport providers.

4. Discuss the type and number of staff required during a walk of the event footprint. Accurate staff deployment is vital to ensure the smooth running of both a security and stewarding service. Think also about the type of staff who will be required (close protection officers, stewards, search and screening officers, response teams, supervisors, etc.). These should be determined by the audience profile as well as the anticipated numbers attending. Conduct a staff risk assessment.

5. Choose your security staff wisely. The challenge here relates to the recruitment and motivation of a dependable, vetted and fully trained workforce. It's vital security firms invest in the training and development of officers to enhance their skills and create a greater sense of commitment.

6. Investigate the use of any technology and additional support that could be useful, e.g. CCTV vans, body worn cameras, event fire crew and medical capability or canine services, offering specialist detection and general purpose dogs.

7. Produce a written briefing document detailing all aspects of the event from staff arrival through to staff leaving the venue, so everyone is aware of their purpose and responsibilities. Include a staff plan (dot map) showing locations of all staff manning the event.

8. Carry out regular scenario and desk top exercises to support the event organisers in testing and improving emergency procedures. This will help build confidence that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are capable of fulfilling them.

9. Ensure a final venue walk is taken as close to the event as possible to ensure no issues have arisen since the previous recce.

10. Organise a post-event debrief to discuss any issues and take on board any improvements that could be made in planning for the next big event.

The preparation for such events can often take months, if not years, and contingency planning and risk management, if done in the early stages, can significantly reduce the risk of threat and contribute to the overall success of the event. An early understanding of the security issues involved can save time and reduce costs by incorporating identified measures before advanced plans are developed.

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