

KNOWLEDGE PARTNER

A target rich environment

Lee Doddridge, former NaCTSO member, ASC Director and Director of Covenant and Revuit and Record UK's Security Entrance Control Specialist, Stephen Goodridge look at the security threats faced by leisure centres and gyms

Evaluating threats based on historical data, crime reports, and experience helps determine their legitimacy and prioritise security measures.

The most common threat to any leisure centre is 'opportunistic crime'. In addition, leisure centres and gyms by their very nature attract a lot of younger or vulnerable people so 'safeguarding' is an essential aspect of the overall security architecture.

It is important to understand what may make a leisure centre more attractive as a potential target from a threat source. Let's look at each one.

Tailgating: one of the key reasons for implementing pedestrian security solutions is to limit access to authorised users by they paying members of the public or staff. While we would call this threat opportunistic, loss of revenue can be serious, so this is an important consideration when specifying the most appropriate security solution.

Likely benefits or rewards: each leisure centre in the UK (and abroad) will have changing rooms and lockers, which are a 'target rich' environment for the criminal. How many parents leave items unprotected when watching their child swim? How many businesspeople use the centre before, during or after work? The value of items in lockers can

be considerable. A criminal doesn't need to break into the centre - they are more likely to pay, enter legally and then conduct a criminal act by forcing open a locker, or directly attacking an individual.



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Reward versus effort: how long would it take someone, with a small crowbar or jemmy, to force open a locker? The little noise caused would no doubt be masked by the noises from the pool or gym, or the sound of music playing. A criminal could attack numerous lockers and receive a high value reward. They need only sit 'pretending to get changed' and casually watch who is placing what into lockers.

Ease of access and escape: it is not expensive to enter a leisure centre, and many have free access to most areas. If there are speed gates or turnstiles in situ, these would be what a security consultant would call 'compliant' measures. Most members of the public would ▶



GymSafe™

GymSafe is a specialist monitoring service provided by Professional Surveillance Management Ltd (PSM) who are experts in CCTV monitoring. Offering unique 24-hour gym security systems, GymSafe is revolutionising the way gym owners manage their facilities.

With the rise of 24/7 gyms, it has become increasingly important for gym owners to meet the demands of their customers whilst also ensuring safety and security around the clock.

GymSafe offers a variety of tailored security solutions that cater to the unique needs of gym and leisure facilities, including real-time CCTV monitoring, emergency response and anti-tailgating services. This provides peace of mind to gym owners and allows their members to confidently work out at any hour. Record UK's entry systems, particularly its speed gates, can fit seamlessly with GymSafe's alarm detection and anti-tailgating solutions. Remote sensors that are fitted to speed gates will detect any suspicious or illegal activity such as tailgating and unauthorised entry, including people jumping over an entry point.

Stephen Goodridge, SEC Business Development Manager for Record UK, has been working with PSM for over 7 years, and understands how integrating entry systems with GymSafe's alarm detection and CCTV monitoring can prevent non-members entering the gym illegally, making gyms more secure and safer for paying members.

adhere to the access control, a criminal however, would simply jump over with very little effort. The exit from a leisure centre could be by any fire escape or back through a speed gate designed to allow free exit.

The existing protective security profile: most leisure centres' security focuses on the security of personal possessions in the form of lockers, DBS checks for lifeguards and other key staff or the security of pool chemicals, such as chlorine. The overall protective security measures in most leisure centres are not what is required when faced with the threats we face today.

Police response times: most leisure centres are located in urban, town or city locations; the police response time to any incident is 20 minutes within these environments. Can your security architecture delay someone for 20 minutes so that the response can get there in time? Probably not. With the current pressures on policing, a call to a leisure centre regarding a theft from a locker will most likely be passed to a PCSO for follow up within 48hrs or more. In the worst-case scenario, a weapon, bladed or otherwise is

used to threaten people, again a 20 minute response will be the norm. Today our security architecture and our security training, along with policies and procedures, must enable us to manage the situation until an emergency response arrives.

“**AS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGNERS OF THIS CONCEPT, I HAVE SEEN HOW IT HAS TRANSFORMED THE 24/7 LANDSCAPE FOR INDEPENDENT GYMS.**”

Monitoring, challenges, awareness and security culture: if a leisure centre has a CCTV system, it is most likely used for recording and obtaining evidence and is not monitored live by a designated security officer. Within the United Kingdom we are seen as 'too polite' and do not challenge people or their behaviours enough and most times staff have not been trained in recognising some of these

criminal behaviours. The overall security culture is designed towards 'safeguarding' not preventing crime. The ACT Awareness training is designed for counter terrorism, but as stated, terrorism is a crime, and therefore the 'free' training should be used to inform and make staff aware of the threats posed.

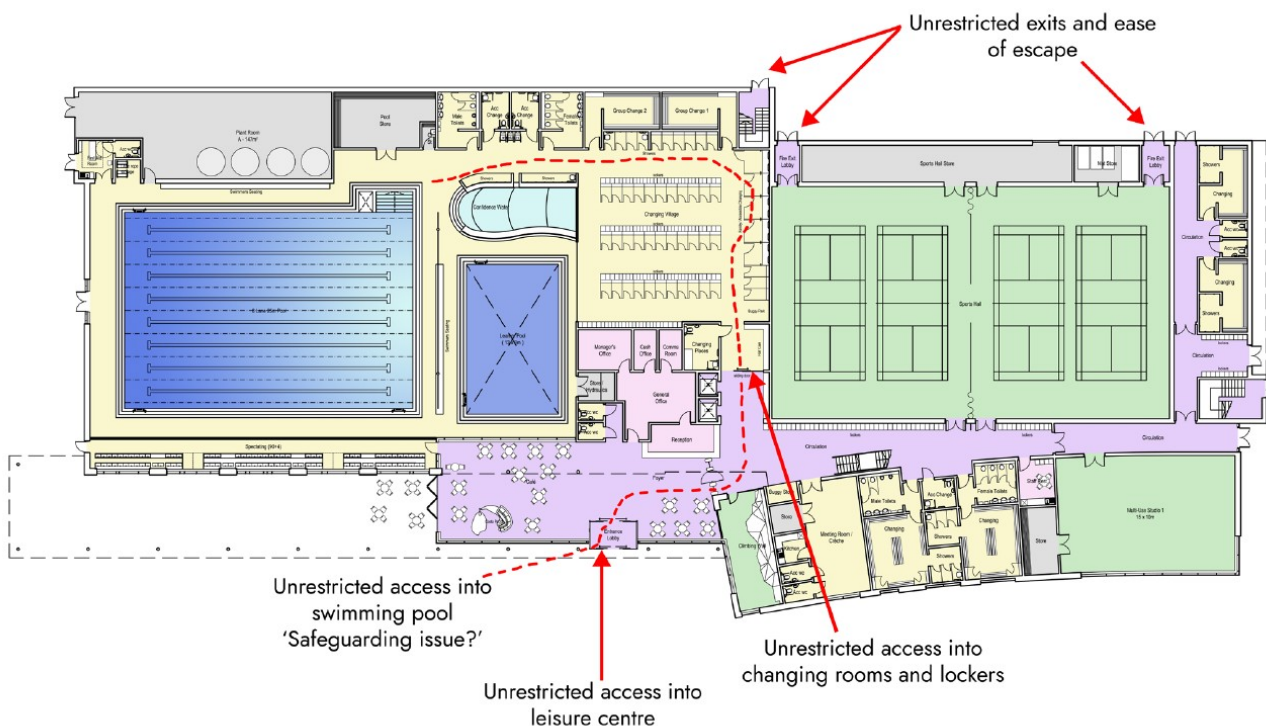
Before moving on to Solutions take a look at the leisure centre layout example below, marked up with some vulnerabilities.

Solutions

There are several considerations to consider when specifying the most appropriate security solution for your venue, including price, flow, safety, security and aesthetics. For a more detailed analysis of how to evaluate your security vulnerabilities and to give you guidance on selecting the right solution please refer to this online article www.recorduk.com/article.

Martyn's Law/Protect Duty

Whilst we do not know for sure what the Law will entail, it will require locations to conduct a





comprehensive Counter Terrorism Risk Assessment, Emergency Response Plans, Security Reviews and staff training. Also, the responsibility for security and liability will sit at senior levels within the organisations that fall under the Duty with potential criminal prosecution for the most egregious transgressions. Visit <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/19/martyns-law-factsheet/> for the latest information from government.

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**IT IS ALL VERY WELL
 ALARMS BEING SET UP
 BUT IF NO ONE REACTS,
 THEY ARE POINTLESS.**”

Safety in Operation - BS EN 17352

As of January 1st 2024 a new safety standard, BS EN 17352, became part of the legal safety framework for speed gates and automated turnstiles. This new safety standard puts an explicit responsibility on all parties implementing these products

Luxe Fitness Case Study

With over a hundred classes available, Bristol's Luxe Fitness is a 24/7 facility. The goal was to provide a modern and aesthetically pleasing security door system that would act as a barrier to the ambient air and physically secure the building against unauthorised entry attempts whilst creating a safe environment for their members and employees.

The solution

Given its 24/7 operation and unmanned entrance, Luxe Fitness aimed to maintain strict access control. Record installed two security revolvers and one automated DDA swing door at the main entrance. Members access

to ensure they are safe in use and that any residual risks defined for the population of users who will be using the solution (trained staff, public, vulnerable users, children, etc.) are identified and where possible mitigated. It is important to understand that everyone in the supply chain including the end user could be held liable were any injury

the gym by presenting a QR code on their phones to the door readers, ensuring that only those who are up-to-date with their payments can enter, blocking unauthorised entry attempts.

To enhance security, a time-of-flight camera was installed to detect suspicious movements. If tailgating or piggybacking is attempted, the system triggers red flashing lights and reverses the doors to eject unauthorised individuals.

Another crucial requirement was the system's ability to handle high traffic volumes in both directions simultaneously whilst minimising delays at busy times. Record's 3-wing security revolving doors can process up to 15 people per minute per door, with wider and more comfortable segments to accommodate members carrying sports bags, facilitating a quick and safe exit, particularly after classes.

The result

When asked about the importance of the entrance, Luxe Fitness owner Parantha Narendran said: *"It is the first point of contact for the customer and sets the tone for what's inside. A distinctive entrance also differentiates us from lower-cost gyms. We chose Record Security Revolving Doors because we were confident in receiving excellent support if any issues arose, making it worth the investment."*

to occur. We would recommend visiting the ADSA website to find out more information and to have your staff appropriately trained in its use and application including, in particular, performing risk assessments. Please visit: <https://adsa.org.uk/education/courses/> for further information. ■