



INTELLIGENCE

Security Overview: FIFA World Cup 2026 – Operational Planning and Risk Implications for UK Venues and Estates

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is expected to significantly increase footfall across UK licensed venues, entertainment districts, hotels, fan zones, mixed-use estates, and corporate locations. Although hosted overseas, the tournament will create an elevated domestic security and safety environment requiring enhanced operational planning, compliance assurance, and coordinated risk management.

Key Risk Themes

Protective Security and Terrorism

Crowded public venues remain attractive targets for terrorism, extremist activity, hostile reconnaissance, and serious organised crime. Risks include low-complexity, high-impact attacks such as knife attacks, vehicle attacks, IEDs, drone activity, lone actors, cyber disruption, and coordinated disorder.

Public Disorder and Crime

Increased alcohol consumption, supporter rivalry, and high-density gatherings elevate the likelihood of violence, anti-social behaviour, theft, public disorder, and safeguarding incidents.

Geopolitical and Protest-Related Risks

Ongoing international tensions may increase the risk of protests, activist disruption, hate crime, online incitement, and ideologically motivated incidents, particularly during high-profile matches involving politically sensitive nations.

Safeguarding and VAWG

Major sporting events historically correlate with increased reports of sexual harassment, spiking, predatory behaviour, domestic abuse, and vulnerability incidents. Effective safeguarding arrangements are therefore a critical operational requirement.

Business Continuity and Estate Security

Corporate estates near transport hubs, hospitality venues, or public viewing areas may experience crowd spillover, access control challenges, hostile reconnaissance, protest activity, and disruption to normal operations.

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Connected Risk Picture:

The primary operational challenge is that these risks are interconnected rather than isolated. Increased footfall can simultaneously elevate terrorism exposure, crime, disorder, safeguarding concerns, transport disruption, and business continuity impacts. Geopolitical tensions may act as a catalyst for protest activity, hate crime, online radicalisation, and crowd disorder, creating complex incident management requirements. Security planning should therefore adopt a whole-system approach that integrates protective security, safeguarding, operational resilience, and emergency response.

Compliance Considerations:

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) introduces new preparedness obligations for qualifying premises and events. Organisations should use the tournament period to review and test plans, procedures, risk assessments, and operational readiness. Particular attention should be given to risks within the immediate vicinity, including:

- External queues and smoking areas
- Public plazas and pedestrian routes
- Shared estate spaces
- Transport interfaces and drop-off points
- Crowd overspill locations

Clear ownership and accountability for shared-space security responsibilities should be established across landlords, occupiers, venue operators, and event organisers.

Operational Planning Priorities:

To support informed decision-making and risk reduction, organisations should:

- Review terrorism and event-specific risk assessments.
- Assess vulnerabilities within immediate vicinity areas.
- Validate Martyn's Law preparedness and compliance requirements.
- Strengthen crowd management, access control, and search procedures.
- Test lockdown, evacuation, and invacuation arrangements.
- Review deployment models, staffing levels, and surge capability.
- Enhance CCTV monitoring, intelligence gathering, and suspicious activity reporting.
- Implement robust safeguarding and VAWG measures.
- Confirm emergency communication and crisis management arrangements.
- Coordinate planning with police, local authorities, neighbouring occupiers, and resilience partners.
- Review business continuity and recovery plans for disruption scenarios.
- Decision-Making Implications

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Senior leaders, Security Managers and Operational teams should view the **World Cup as a period of elevated operational risk requiring proactive preparation rather than reactive response**. Decisions relating to staffing, security resources, venue operations, safeguarding, and emergency preparedness should be informed by an integrated assessment of terrorism, disorder, crime, compliance, and business continuity risks. Organisations that plan early, test capabilities, and strengthen partnerships will be better positioned to maintain safety, compliance, resilience, and public confidence throughout the tournament period.

<https://www.protectuk.police.uk/news-views/get-summer-ready-support-summer-campaign-and-help-keep-public-safe>

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