My name is Gary Stroddart I'm the security training manager for AMSL security for the Highlands and Islands airports. Security agents are needed at airports, mainly, to prevent unlawful acts against civil aviation. What that basically means is we’re to keep the traveling public and our staff safe when they're transiting through our airports. Although a lot of the airports are small in size, it could be an access point for somebody that may want to do us harm and get something prohibited into the system.

The daily tasks of a security agent can be varied. The main focus of the operation is in the departure areas where security staff deal with the searching of passengers themselves when required to do so. Searching of their luggage, both cabin and hold baggage. Operating the x-ray equipment, where we put all those items through for screening. Carrying out liquid testing and explosive trace sampling. That's the main part of the operation, there is also vehicle check points where we search vehicles. Dealing with staff access. Patrolling, which can be either on foot or vehicle controls. We patrol restricted and unrestricted areas of the airfield.

Ongoing training is continued in the security officers career, annually they must complete mandatory refresher training. They also, every month, must complete one hour of x-ray simulation training, which is a software package run on a computer. Every six months they must sit an x-ray test because, as you can imagine, x-raying is a key skill, we need them to be on top of their game. So there is a lot of focus on x-ray training. They do e-learning package, which there are mandatory modules, again, computer-based training. Once they finished their mandatory training on the computer, there is a catalogue of courses which, basically, they can sign up to any of those courses that they wish to complete.

The most challenging part of the job will be dealing with occasionally irate passengers. This can lead to, obviously, aircrafts, like a car, can break down. So flights get delayed and obviously occasionally gets cancelled. This, as you can imagine, can upset passengers occasionally. So you must, again, be able to communicate and pacify the passengers and keep them calm etcetera. Also if the plane gets delayed you might have to work a little bit extra in timing and that sort of stuff. So you must be adaptable as well. Also passengers can occasionally get upset when we confiscate items, i.e. prohibited items that are not allowed through security: excess liquids, maybe a blade that they forgot was in her bag, that sort of thing.

Well what we're looking for is people must be aged 18 or over to hold an airport pass. We’re looking for a reasonable level of fitness, there is a bit of bending and stretching in the job. We're looking for just basic levels of English, both verbal and written, this is important when dealing with the public and writing reports etcetera and a basic, sort of, numeracy skill set. To be a good security agent you must be a people person, okay. You must enjoy working with the public. You must be a good communicator, so again, linking into working with the public and passengers and also your colleagues and airline staff, you must be able to communicate with all those individuals. You must be adaptable, things in this job do change as technologies move on. You must be reliable and keen to learn new skills because things are always changing in this industry.

What I would say is come and give it a go. It's definitely, if you are people person, you thrive on variety because normally no two days are the same, then this is a job for you.