

Security Officer or Guard

Security officers or guards protect people, property, goods and money from theft and damage. They must be ready to deal with intruders and emergency situations. You could work in a range of organisations, with your role varying depending on the type of industry you work in. All security work has an element of risk.

The Work

Door Supervisor (Bouncer)

You could be:

- standing at the door to a club, bar or other licensed premises, usually with another door supervisor, to control who goes in and out
- asking for identification as proof of age
- searching customers' bags and clothing for any prohibited items
- collecting tickets
- dealing with troublemakers, and calling the police, if necessary
- assisting with emergency and safety procedures such as fire alarms
- writing reports to use in court, or giving evidence in court.

Reception Security Officer (Concierge)

You could be:

- working in the reception area of an office, factory or building site, where large numbers of people come and go
- keeping a record of everyone entering and leaving, on foot or in vehicles
- greeting visitors, getting them to sign the visitors' book, issuing passes and giving directions
- checking deliveries to the premises
- monitoring closed circuit television (CCTV) or alarms
- keeping exits clear and taking responsibility for getting people out safely in an emergency.

Patrolling Security Officer or Guard

You could be:

- patrolling premises, such as shopping malls, retail stores, industrial buildings, offices or building sites, in many cases on your own and often at night, to check for intruders or hazards such as fire risks
- using a specially trained guard dog
- questioning suspicious people and escorting them off the premises or holding them until the police arrive
- calling for help, if necessary, from the police or the emergency services
- travelling to a number of different places if you patrol more than one site
- holding keys for buildings and allowing access to the police or emergency services if necessary

- writing reports and keeping records.

Cash-in-Transit Security Officer or Guard

You could be:

- collecting money or items of value such as jewellery or documents, and delivering them safely
- travelling in an armoured vehicle, usually as part of a small team.

Prison Custody Officer

You could be:

- driving a purpose-built secure vehicle to transport prisoners to places such as court or hospital
- conducting searches
- managing the movement of prisoners at the destination.

Airport Security Officer

You could be:

- checking ID and travel documents of passengers and other people entering restricted areas
- guarding airport boundaries and restricted areas
- searching aircraft for suspicious packages
- checking and perhaps searching passengers, vehicles, luggage and other items
- holding people suspected of illegal behaviour, until the police arrive
- assisting people through the airport and security procedures.

Bodyguard

You could be:

- providing around the clock protection for clients who are in the public eye, such as TV, film and music celebrities and politicians, or wealthy business people
- accompanying your client to public or private events
- checking places out before your client's visit to ensure their safety
- ensuring the safety of the client's family
- installing extra surveillance equipment such as close circuit cameras
- driving your client safely to and from venues
- staying close when your client is walking about in public
- keeping a constant watch on the surrounding crowds, looking for unusual or threatening behaviour, or faces you recognise
- working in a team with other security professionals, keeping in touch by radio.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour. This may rise to between £12.00 and £14.00 an hour with experience. Supervisors might earn up to £23,000 a year. Pay rates for security managers also vary, but can be £25,000 a year or more. Security officers working with the civil service can expect to earn between £32,465 and £35,232 a year (March 2024).

Most bodyguards work on a self-employed basis. Pay depends on the client or company, experience and the risk of the job involved. A low risk job can pay anywhere from £100 to £500 a day. A high risk job, or one involving the protection of high profile or very wealthy clients, can pay between £500 and £1000 a day. An extremely high risk job can pay up to £1,500 a day or more.

Conditions

- You may work indoors, or outdoors in all weathers, depending on the type of work you do.
- Cash-in-transit security officers spend most of their time travelling in a vehicle.
- Hours can be around 37-42 a week, but overtime is common and this job is often affected by the Working Time Regulations. You may work regular hours but shifts are more common and there is often night work.
- Some jobs only offer night work.
- Part time work is available in some areas of security.
- You usually have to wear a uniform and, for cash-in-transit officers, a protective helmet and body armour.

Getting In

- You do not need formal entry qualifications, but a good general education is useful.
- For some jobs you need a driving licence, possibly the C1 class which allows you to drive the larger, heavier vehicles for transporting cash or prisoners.
- For many entrants this is a second career, often after experience in the police or armed services.
- Most people working in the security industry require a licence from the Security Industry Authority (SIA). This has to be renewed every 3 years.
- To qualify for this, you must be at least 18 and have the relevant qualification for the field of work you are going in to. For example a door supervisor would need the Award for Door Supervisors in the Private Security Industry (Scotland) at SCQF Level 6 (you will need a first aid qualification before applying), and a cash-in-transit security officer would need a Level 2 Award for Working as a Cash and Valuables in Transit Operative within the Private Security Industry. See the SIA website for all required qualifications. A bodyguard would require a Level 3 Certificate for Close Protection Operatives Working in the Private Industry.
- You may have to pass a medical test.
- You would require a satisfactory PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) check to show you are suitable for

this type of work. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](#) for details.

- There may be other security checks, particularly for airport or prison transport jobs.

Jobs are usually advertised in the press, on the [Find a Job](#) website, or in Jobcentre Plus offices.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent communication and customer service skills
- honesty and a sense of responsibility
- the confidence to work alone and face possible threats
- a good memory for faces and details
- good judgement, to know when to ask for help.

You need to be able to:

- follow instructions and procedures
- make decisions
- think and react quickly
- deal with a wide range of people in a fair, safe and assertive manner
- remain calm in difficult situations.

Training

- Training varies depending on the company or organisation you work for.
- Induction training is usually on the job. It will generally cover aspects of the work, along with information on your legal powers and responsibilities.
- You may take short specialist courses run by the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and Skills for Security.

Getting On

- There is a wide range of employers in this type of work.
- You could work for a business, a security company, a retail chain or for a local authority or government department.
- Prospects for promotion are better in a large organisation. With experience, and perhaps further training, you may be promoted to be a supervisor, manager or trainer.
- For managers, the Security Institute offers a Certificate, a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma in Security Management, which you can take by distance learning.

Contacts

British Bodyguard Association

Email: admin@the-bba.org.uk

Website: www.the-bba.org.uk

X: @theBBA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/BritishBodyguardAssociation

Security Industry Authority (SIA)

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority

X: @SIAuk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thesiauk

Security Institute

Tel: 02476 346 464

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X: @SyInstitute

Facebook: www.facebook.com/syinstitute

Skills for Security

Tel: 01905 744000

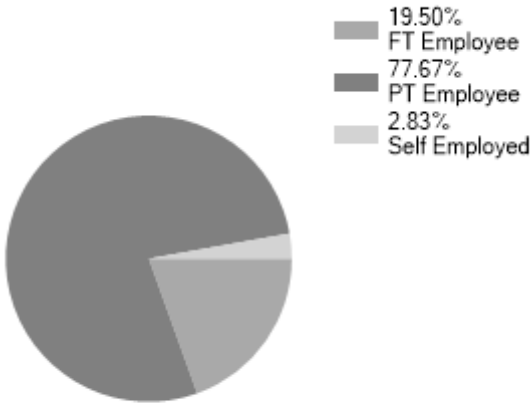
Email: info@skillsforsecurity.org.uk

Website: www.skills4security.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/skillsforsec

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

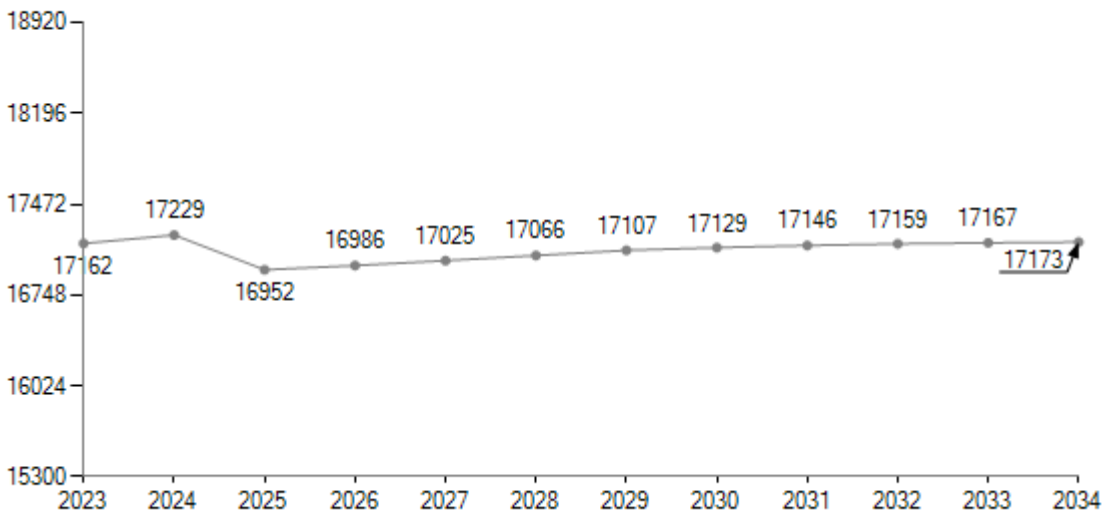


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)