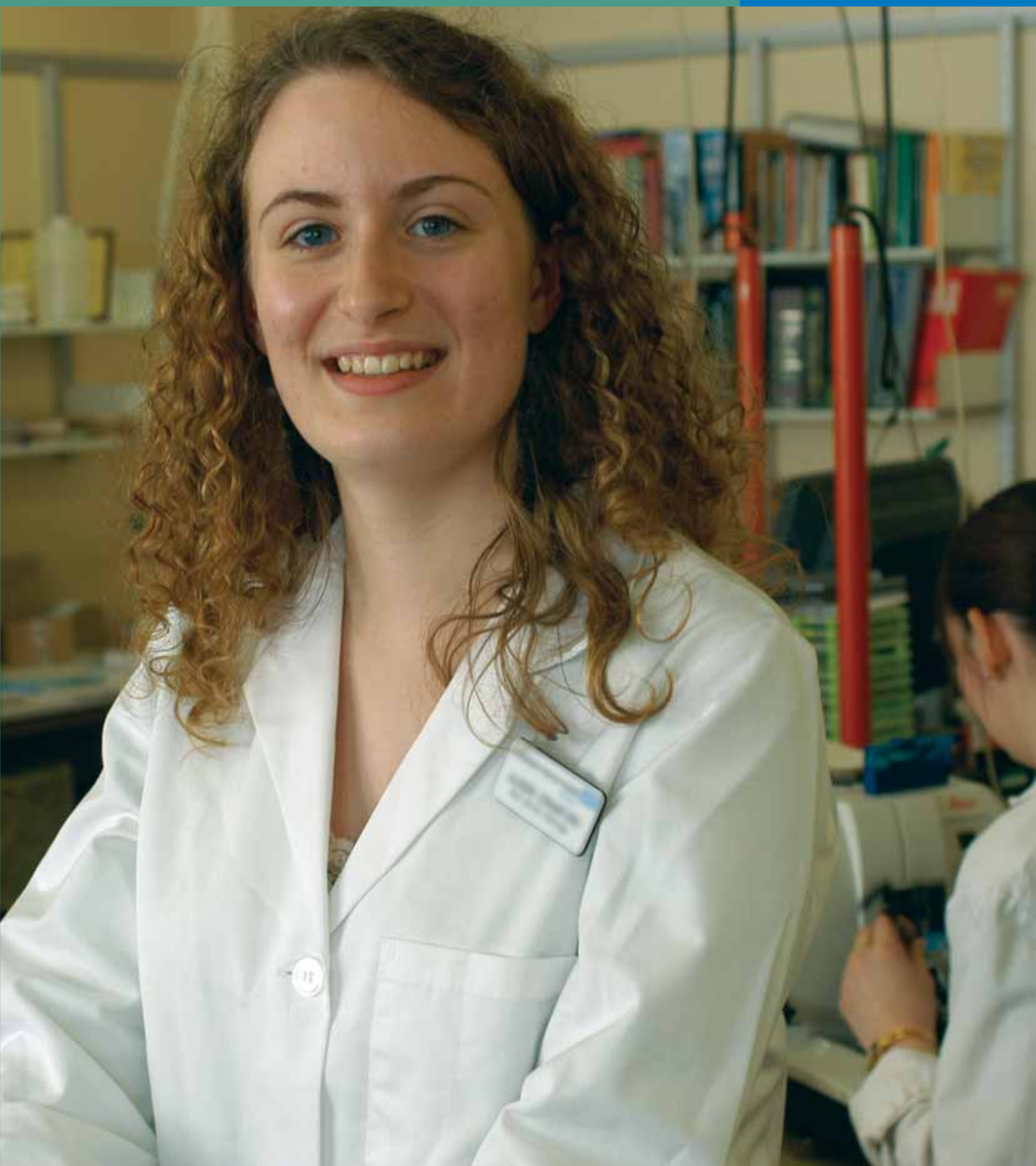
NHS Careers

Careers in healthcare science

Join the team and make a difference



Welcome to the NHS

The NHS offers a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

With more than 300 different careers on offer, there is a job for you whatever your interests, skills or qualifications.

What's more, you'll be given every opportunity to build on your skills and learn new ones as part of the Career Framework – a system that demonstrates our commitment to skills development. See the centre pages for more information about this.

Scientists, accountants, porters, psychologists, nurses, information technologists and estate managers, to name but a few, are all needed to ensure the smooth running of the NHS. These people, and many more, work together as a team to deliver the very best care for our patients.

To find out more about becoming a member of the NHS team, call 0345 60 60 655, email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk or visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

Contents

Foreword

In this booklet, you'll find out what this fast-developing area of healthcare can offer you, and learn how it fits into the day-to-day working of the NHS.

If you are passionate about technology or science, and about helping others, a career in healthcare science offers a wide range of opportunities.

Healthcare scientists play a vital role in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of a huge number of medical conditions, as well as in rehabilitation. Rapid advances in technology mean this is now one of the most exciting, challenging and rewarding areas of the NHS.

Whatever your academic background, if you have an interest in science, you can find a role that's right for you. We offer a flexible working environment, excellent benefits and a wealth of opportunities to develop your career.

There is an exciting programme of change underway in healthcare science. It is looking at enhancing the training and education of professionals to equip them with the skills to lead the changes for healthcare science delivery for the future. For the most up-to-date information on entry routes into training and the changing career pathways, please visit the healthcare science section of the NHS Careers website.

The NHS Careers team

For more information about working in healthcare science, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

If you have any questions, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk






The NHS – a rewarding place to work

There are few careers that are as rewarding as one in the NHS, or that give you the opportunity to work with such a variety of people.

We actively recruit people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience. This helps us understand the different needs of the patients we serve every day and provide the best possible service.

Whichever area you join, you become part of a talented, passionate team of people, committed to providing the best care and treatment to patients. You will also enjoy one of the most competitive and flexible benefits packages offered by any employer in the UK.

Benefits of working in the NHS

Everyone who joins the NHS is guaranteed a salary that matches their ability and responsibilities, and given every opportunity to increase it through training and development.

On top of your basic salary, you will receive at least 27 days' holiday each year, plus a range of other benefits, including occupational health and counselling services.

Join one of the UK's best pension schemes

The NHS Pension Scheme is one of the most generous and comprehensive in the UK. Every new employee automatically becomes a member and you will get an excellent package of pension benefits, fully protected against inflation and guaranteed by the Government.

For more information about the pension scheme, and a full list of the benefits included, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

PAY AND CONDITIONS

The NHS pay system, known as Agenda for Change, offers real benefits for all directly employed staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers including:

- a standard working week of 37.5 hours
- holiday entitlements of 27 days per year, plus eight general and public holidays, rising to 33 days after ten years' service
- pay enhancements to reward out of hours, shift and overtime working
- career and pay progression based on the application of knowledge and skills
- annual personal development review to support career aspirations.

Other benefits of working in the NHS include training, occupational health services, automatic membership of the NHS Pension Scheme (unless you choose to opt out) and study leave for sponsored courses.

To find out more about the different Agenda for Change bands, and see the most up-to-date starting salaries for each one, go to www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

FULFIL YOUR POTENTIAL

- The NHS is committed to offering development and learning opportunities for all full-time and part-time staff
- No matter where you start within the NHS, you'll have access to extra training and be given every chance to progress within the organisation
- You will receive an annual personal review and development plan to support your career progression
- You will be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge and take on new responsibilities through the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

See the centre pages for more on the Career Framework and examples of how an employee has progressed through the NHS.

CASE STUDY

Name: Richard Fernandez

Job title: clinical scientist in medical physics, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London

Entry route: professional training scheme

In his role as a clinical scientist, Richard faces new challenges every day, and it's this variety and diversity that makes the role so appealing.

There isn't a typical day in my job. One day I might be testing a gamma camera, making sure it's working properly for patient imaging. The next I might be giving a patient radioactive treatment for thyroid cancer. Often they will be worried about their treatment and I'll have to allay their concerns. On other occasions I'll be advising staff on safety measures when dealing with radiation.

The challenges of the job are what I really enjoy. It's the diversity. The common perception of a physicist far removed from people didn't appeal to me. I love the variety and interaction with clinical staff and the general public.

I also enjoy teaching students on postgraduate nuclear medicine courses. What is also challenging is that it is one of the most regulated disciplines. It's vital to make sure we always meet the relevant regulations.

If you want to do this job you need a clear idea about what's involved in nuclear medicine. You obviously need an excellent grounding in physics and to be able to apply this theory. It's also essential to have people skills – I often have to explain complex nuclear physics in easily understandable language.

The key skills to this job really are in the title: clinical scientist. You have to balance working as a scientist with the requirements of a clinical setting.

Helping you find the right work-life balance

As an NHS employee, you can benefit from flexible working, childcare and career support, and high standards of equality and diversity.

Over the past ten years, there have been a number of initiatives that have brought about significant improvements to the work-life balance of NHS staff – reducing stress, increasing motivation and improving productivity among staff. All these factors have helped improve patient care.

Moving forward, it is vital that we capitalise on these initiatives and ensure that the standards achieved are maintained and developed.

You can find more information about the initiative and the plans for the future at www.nhsemployers.org/healthyworkplaces

Manage your commitments in and out of work

The size and diversity of the NHS means we can offer you a range of flexible working opportunities.

Part-time roles and jobshare opportunities are often available, as well as term-time only, evening and weekend positions. We will do everything we can to help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life – whether you're studying for a new qualification, raising a family or have other responsibilities.

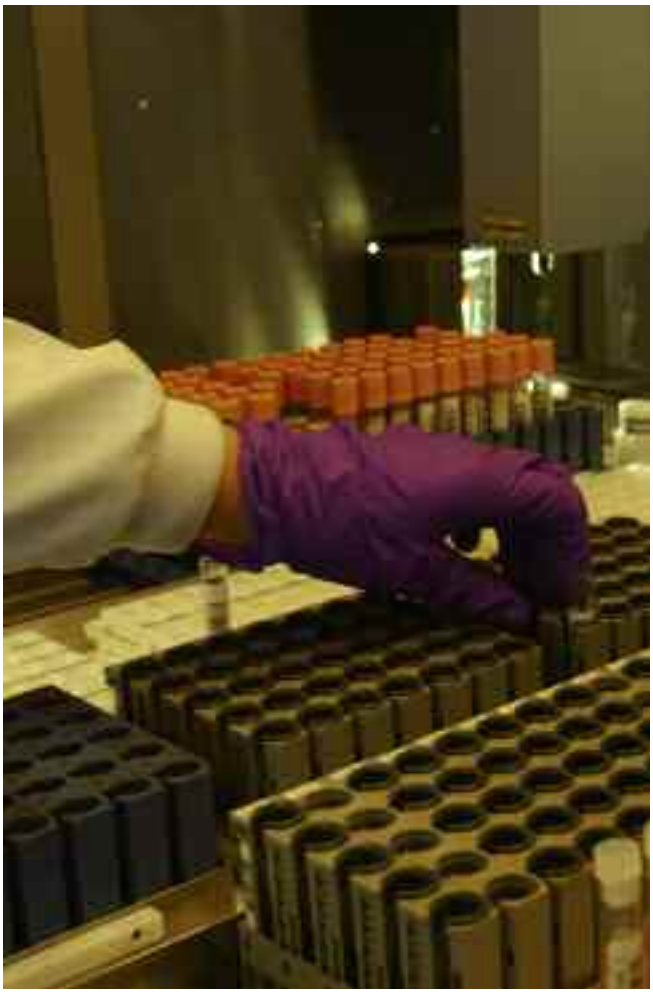
Many people take an extended break to look after young children or other dependants who need special care, or to study full time.

We will help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life

As well as offering advice and support for people looking after sick or elderly relatives, we may be able to provide a range of childcare services for all NHS employees, including:

- nursery care
- after-school and breakfast clubs
- holiday play schemes
- emergency care.

Get more information about the benefits and opportunities offered by the NHS at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits



Your career in healthcare science

Healthcare science is one of the fastest-moving areas of the NHS and one whose importance will continue to grow.

On a day-to-day basis, the NHS relies on healthcare scientists to gather information about patients, recommend the best treatment and, in many cases, administer it themselves. They contribute to 80 per cent of decisions about patient treatment.

At the same time, healthcare scientists are continually developing and testing more sophisticated technology and techniques. Today's advances will form the basis of tomorrow's treatments, providing safer and more effective ways to diagnose and manage medical conditions.

The three areas of healthcare science

The work of healthcare scientists is grouped into three main areas, based on the type of science involved in the work.

Life sciences

If you work in life sciences, you will play a crucial role in helping to improve our understanding of illnesses and their treatment. You might also be responsible for developing new treatments for common medical problems, such as infertility or allergies.

The majority of your time will be spent in hospital laboratories but you may also work on hospital wards or in the community. In a hospital setting, you will often be working in a clinical pathology laboratory to

CASE STUDY

Name: Alison Crawford

Job title: medical laboratory assistant, Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust

Entry route: laboratory assistant after GCSEs

Since joining the NHS after her GCSEs, Alison has taken full advantage of the training opportunities to continue her education and develop her skills.

I joined the NHS straight from school aged 16, and spent six months supporting the biomedical scientists in the pathology department.

Although I enjoyed the work, I was keen to take on more responsibility and develop my skills. So when my manager suggested I enrol for biology and chemistry A levels, as part of my development, I jumped at the chance.

The NHS funded the courses for me, and gave me time off when I needed it. I have to say that it's been a real challenge combining work and study, but very rewarding.

It is very satisfying for me to have the chance to put what I learn at college to good use while I am at work.

The training and development opportunities here are excellent. It's really encouraging to think that people from all backgrounds can have a great career in the NHS and be fully supported along the way.

analyse different samples from patients and give doctors the information they need to make a first accurate diagnosis. You will also work with doctors to choose the most effective treatment. Genetics is often based in specialist hospitals.

Life sciences is divided into four areas, each with its own particular focus.

- blood diagnostic sciences
- infection sciences
- tissue and cellular science
- genetics.

Physiological sciences

In this area of healthcare science, you will examine patients directly to look for any problems in the way their body is working.

You'll be part of a medical or surgical team, and your work will involve direct interaction with patients. You will use the very latest techniques and equipment to identify any abnormalities and help to restore body functions, such as problems with the heart and lungs.

You may also provide long-term care for patients, helping to improve their quality of life.

Most scientists in this area are based in hospitals, working in clinics or departments and operating theatres. However, there are increasing opportunities to work in the community at a health centre, visiting patients in their homes or at school. You will work with patients of all ages, from newborn babies to the elderly.

Physical sciences and engineering

In this area, you will work closely with other NHS clinical teams, making sure the equipment they use such as renal dialysis machines, is functioning safely and effectively.

You'll also be responsible for developing new techniques and technology to measure what is happening in the body and to diagnose and treat disease. These might include ultrasound, radiation, magnetic resonance and clinical photography, to explore or record the workings of the body.

You might also develop techniques to design artificial limbs and body parts or improve facial reconstruction for those involved in accidents or born with disabilities.

To find out more about the qualifications needed to work in healthcare science visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications

Today's advances will form the basis of tomorrow's treatments, providing safer and more effective ways to diagnose and manage medical conditions

CASE STUDY

Name: Sam Varley

Job title: associate director of children's services, Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust, London

Entry route: trainee medical technical officer after GCSEs

Sam's story is a great illustration of the opportunities to progress and work in different areas of the NHS.

I joined the NHS at 16 with five GCSEs. My first job was trainee medical technical officer in audiology at St John's hospital in Chelmsford, where I learned the basics of how to test people's hearing and balance and provide adult rehabilitation services.

After two years' on-the-job training, I earned a BTEC in medical physics and physiological measurement and qualified as an audiology technician. I continued my education and completed an HNC in medical physics and physiological measurement, for which I studied one day a week. This helped me reach the position of senior audiologist, where I stayed for several more years.

My next job was in a small, department at the Royal Ear Hospital in London. The medical consultants involved me in a range of tasks and encouraged me to get more qualifications.

Next, I worked as head of a small audiology team at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London for two years, gaining management skills; I was then supported to take a full-time MSc course to qualify as an audiological scientist.

A few years later I was made head of audiology at Tower Hamlets PCT, overseeing a complex audiology service. I also developed my management and leadership skills.

I'm now associate director of children's services at Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust. I was offered this role as the NHS recognised the skills I'd gained as a clinician and a manager.

Career Framework

The Career Framework has been designed to improve career development and job satisfaction for NHS employees.

It encourages individuals to learn new skills and take on extra responsibilities that enable them to progress within the organisation. Many people take on additional responsibility within their own area, while others retrain and move to different roles.

The case study on page 9 describes how Sam Varley has progressed within healthcare science. You can

	Ambulance service professions	Allied health professions	Dental care professions	Healthcare science
9 More senior staff	Clinical director of service	Director of therapies		Director of regional genetics services
8 Consultant practitioners	Consultant paramedic	Consultant radiographer		Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics)
7 Advanced practitioners	Advanced paramedic	Specialist speech and language therapist		Clinical scientist (audiology): **performing complex hearing and balance tests in adults and children and managing a department**
6 Senior practitioners/ specialist practitioners	Specialist paramedic	Specialist occupational therapist	Senior dental technologist	Audiology team leader: **performing hearing tests in children, hearing and balance tests in adults, and managing a small team**
5 Practitioners	Paramedic	Dietitian	Dental technician	Senior audiologist: **performing tests of hearing and balance in adults**
4 Assistant practitioners/ associate practitioners	Control room duty officer	Assistant clinical psychologist	Dental therapist	Audiology technician: **performing routine hearing tests in adults**
3 Senior healthcare assistants/technicians	Emergency medical dispatcher	Rehabilitation assistant	Dental hygienist	Trainee audiology technician: **identifying and rectifying hearing aid problems with patients**
2 Support workers	Patient transport service driver	Therapy clinical support worker	Dental nurse	Pharmacy dispensing assistant
1 Initial entry level jobs				

follow her career path in the white boxes on the diagram below, alongside other potential paths in the different areas of the NHS.

The diagram below gives an illustration of a variety of NHS careers and where they may fit on the Career Framework for health. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the NHS Careers website.

Visit the NHS Careers website at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

Health informatics	Management	Midwifery	Nursing	Wider healthcare team
Director of information management and technology	Director of human resources	Director of maternity services	Director of nursing	
Pictures archiving communication manager	**Associate director of children's services: strategic leadership and direction setting for a range of children's services**	Consultant midwife	Nurse consultant in stroke	
Clinical researcher	Head of accounts	Head of midwifery	District nurse (team manager)	Head of estates
Systems analyst	Project manager	Community midwife	Community psychiatric nurse	Chaplain
Librarian	Payroll manager	Midwife	Neonatal nurse	Catering manager
Clinical coder	General office manager		Community care assistant	Medical secretary
Medical records clerk		Maternity support worker	Senior healthcare assistant	Security officer
Support desk assistant		Healthcare assistant (maternity)	Healthcare assistant (nursing)	**Healthcare assistant (audiology): providing patients with information and equipment to manage effective hearing aid use**
Health records assistant			Nurse cadet	Porter

What opportunities are available?

Within healthcare science there is a range of different opportunities, each playing a vital role in the diagnosis, treatment and management of medical conditions.

This section gives a brief overview of the roles in each of the three main areas of healthcare science. You can find more detailed information about all these disciplines in the relevant factsheets, or at **www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working**

Life sciences

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Blood diagnostic sciences	
Blood transfusion	• finding the right type of blood for patients who need it, for example during an operation
Clinical biochemistry	• analysing patients' samples to help with the diagnosis and management of their condition
Haematology	• diagnosing and monitoring blood disorders such as leukaemia, anaemia and haemophilia
Immunology	• helping to diagnose and monitor conditions that attack the immune system, such as allergies or HIV
Toxicology	• investigating the effects of drug overdose and other harmful substances on patients
Tissue and cellular sciences	
Cytopathology & cervical cytology	• screening cervical samples • examining other tissue samples for abnormalities
Embryology and andrology	• dealing with infertility treatments such as in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) • collecting and fertilising eggs from patients
Histocompatibility	• preparing suitable tissue for organ and bone marrow transplants
Histopathology	• examining tissue samples under a microscope to reveal the structure of cells and tissues
Immunogenetics	• developing tests to check patients' immune systems
Tissue banking	• collecting and storing tissue samples • issuing the right samples to be used during treatment
Genetics	
Genetics	• analysing patients' cells to highlight any problems, for example during pregnancy • diagnosing some forms of leukaemia • examining patients' DNA to find inherited conditions and to predict the likelihood of them being passed on to the next generation
Infection sciences	
Microbiology and virology	• studying bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites that cause infection • working in the prevention and control of epidemics
Specialist areas	
Anatomical pathology	• helping doctors identify the causes of death and assisting with post-mortems • supporting bereaved relatives
Electron microscopy	• examining the tiny structures in patients' tissue samples to help make or support diagnosis
Pharmacy	• recommending what medicines to prescribe for patients • preparing medication and advising patients on its use
Quality management	• monitoring the quality of diagnostic tests to ensure they reach the right standards

Physiological sciences

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Cardiovascular, respiratory and sleep physiology	
Cardiac physiology	• assessing patients with suspected or known heart disease • measuring and analysing the mechanical and electrical function of the heart and providing treatment
Clinical perfusion	• managing equipment used to support patients' hearts and lungs during major operations
Critical care technology	• ensuring that complex equipment for life support and the monitoring of critically ill patients is set up and used correctly
Gastrointestinal physiology	• measuring and assessing the activity in the digestive system • helping with diagnosis • providing treatment to improve patients' muscle tone
Respiratory physiology	• assessing patients who may have a lack of oxygen in their lungs, airways or blood • providing treatment and care to patients
Sleep physiology	• monitoring patients who have sleep-related symptoms to identify problems that need treatment and long-term care
Urodynamics	• investigating urinary difficulties and helping to diagnose, plan and monitor treatment
Vascular technology	• assessing patients who have problems with their arteries and veins • helping to identify disease and guide treatment
Neuro-sensory physiology	
Audiology	• measuring and evaluating people's hearing and balance • fitting hearing devices • offering support to help improve the quality of patients' lives
Autonomic neurovascular function	• testing patients for any damage to their nerve functions
Neurophysiology	• investigating the function of the nervous system to help to diagnose and monitor neurological disorders
Vision science	• investigating eye and vision disorders for diagnosis and treatment

Physical sciences and engineering

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Medical physics	
Diagnostic radiology and MRI	• monitoring the performance of imaging equipment • advising on new techniques for improving results
Nuclear medicine	• developing and using techniques that involve radioactive substances to help diagnose and treat patients
Radiation safety	• ensuring the safety of patients and staff in areas where radiation is used by monitoring dose levels
Radiopharmacy medicine	• manufacturing and supplying radioactive substances for use in nuclear medicine
Radiotherapy physics	• maintaining the precision and accuracy of radiation treatments for cancer
Clinical engineering	
Biomedical engineering	• designing artificial body parts, such as hip joints; developing other medical devices • make clinical measurements on patients, for example looking at walking in children
Clinical photography	• providing different types of images, such as photography, fine art and graphic design, to assist with the diagnosis and treatment of patients
Equipment management	• ensuring medical equipment is installed, used and maintained correctly
Maxillofacial prosthetics	• specialising in the reconstruction of jaws, faces and skulls for patients needing corrective treatment
Medical electronics and device management	• using state-of-the-art electronic and computing techniques to design, build and adapt specialised medical equipment
Rehabilitation engineering	• designing and developing rehabilitation aids to help improve the quality of life for disabled patients
Renal science and technology	• ensuring renal dialysis equipment is maintained and used effectively

Getting started

There are roles for everyone in the NHS, no matter how old you are or what qualifications or previous work experience you have. Wherever you start, you will have the chance to learn on the job and carry on studying if you choose.

This section outlines your options and some of the routes into this area of the NHS.

Trainee schemes

You can start as a trainee or assistant, combining study with on-the-job training, so you learn as you earn. If you have GCSEs (or equivalent qualification) and/or some work experience, you can apply for a range of assistant jobs, working in laboratories, wards and outpatient departments with clinical staff and equipment.

You will train while you work, by attending day or short residential courses that we will organise for you. Your training can last from a few months up to two years, depending on the role you choose. You could also go on to do a degree in a specific area.

With A levels or an equivalent qualification, you can start your career as a trainee. As well as working and getting practical training on the job, you may be able to study for a degree or other professional qualification in a specific area of healthcare science.

Graduate opportunities

Undergraduate training in healthcare science is undergoing considerable change. New three-year BSc Hons degree courses (the Practitioner Training Programme) are becoming available to train as a healthcare science practitioner in life sciences, physiological sciences or physical sciences and engineering. These programmes have a significant element of work placement and you will become increasingly specialised in the second and third years towards your chosen career path. Traditional biomedical and physiology degrees will be phased out. Practitioners perform a range of complex clinical, scientific and technical procedures. They are accountable for their own actions and for any staff that they direct or supervise.

Post graduate opportunities

If you have a good degree in a relevant science subject, you can apply to join a three-year, work-based training programme (the Scientist Training Programme) in a specialism of healthcare science. You would be employed in a fixed-term training post working through a series of structured work placements as you learned in the workplace. Participants are given release time to study for an MSc in their chosen specialism. Such training gives the opportunity to work as a more senior scientist at the forefront of medical knowledge and research.

Pay

Most jobs are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. The NHS job evaluation system determines a points score, which is used to match jobs to pay bands and determine levels of basic salary. Each pay band has a number of pay points. Staff will normally progress to the next pay point annually until they reach the top of the pay band. For individual salaries of each pay band, visit **www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payrates**

Your career in healthcare science could begin as a healthcare science assistant at AfC Band 2, rising to healthcare scientist consultant director at Bands 8d – 9, with roles between depending on knowledge, training and experience. For example, the typical AfC banding for a biomedical scientist in pathology is Band 6, an entry-level cytology screener is Band 3 and a medical engineering team manager is Band 7.

For more information on healthcare science professional bodies, visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/hcsci_links.shtml

For more information on pay bands in your chosen career, visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payandbenefits

CASE STUDY

Name: Professor Kevin Spencer

Job title: consultant biochemist and clinical lead, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

Entry route: BSc in biochemistry

Kevin's career began as a biochemist. Since then, his passion for research as well as opportunities to progress in the NHS has meant he is now a visiting professor at a major London university.

I decided I wanted to become a biochemist in my final year of university, after having the opportunity to spend some time in the biochemistry department at my local hospital. I joined the NHS as a trainee which enabled me to study for an MSc in clinical biochemistry. Following my traineeship, I was offered a permanent job as a biochemist, where I worked for two years before successfully applying for a senior post in Southampton.

I was always interested in research and was fortunate to be given the opportunity to pursue this interest alongside my senior biochemist duties after finishing my MSc. I then got a job as a principal biochemist where I was responsible for setting up a regional screening programme in East London to test and diagnose problems during pregnancy, such as spina bifida. My interest in research in maternal and fetal health really began through a combination of this role and some personal experience.

Over the next few years, I progressed to consultant biochemist and then to honorary senior lecturer at King's College London. I was later named visiting professor. I also became head of the clinical biochemistry department, which serves a population of over three quarters of a million people and performs more than seven million tests per year. I also have had a very active research role and have published more than 250 papers in the area of maternal and fetal health.

There is no typical day in my job. One day I will be dealing with enquiries regarding patient results, and the next I am supervising technical work in the laboratory. I also teach at the hospital or university and manage a research team that require support on various studies and experiments.

I am very lucky. I have an incredibly varied role where no one day is the same – other than to say they are all hectic! I find it very rewarding and after more than 30 years in the NHS, I still get a kick out of what I do.

Work placements

Arranging a work placement is the best way to find out if a career in healthcare science is for you.

It will give you the opportunity to experience the working environment, try the type of jobs you would be doing and to speak to people already working in that area of the NHS.

The number and type of work placements available vary depending on where you are in the country. For more information about opportunities in your area, please talk to your local trust.

A work placement will give you the opportunity to experience the working environment, try the type of jobs you would be doing and to speak to people already working in that area of the NHS

CASE STUDY

Name: Saghar Missaghian-Cully

Job title: senior biomedical scientist, histopathology, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London

Entry route: trainee, after completing degree course in applied human biology

Saghar joined the NHS as a trainee after completing her degree. She continued her education to gain her statutory registration, then a masters in biomedical science. She is now studying for her doctorate.

Having studied applied human biology at university, I already had a scientific background when I joined the NHS. However, I then needed to take a postgraduate certificate to be eligible for the registration exam and assessment, in order to become a biomedical scientist.

I later completed an MSc and was then able to apply for a senior post within the histopathology team at Guy's and St Thomas', where I am also the training officer.

We are responsible for preparing and processing tiny specimens of tissue to identify disease or infection. You need dexterity and concentration, as you work with complex equipment.

You also need an understanding of the tissue and disease processes you're looking for, so you can distinguish them more accurately. It's a vital job, and today's healthcare depends on our work for a better understanding of disease.

I enjoy the work because every day you feel like you're achieving something useful. What we do is vital for helping pathologists make a better diagnosis and find the right treatment for patients.

At the same time, we have the opportunity to go deeper into the science that's involved and extend our own knowledge through further training and development.

I enjoy the work because every day you feel like you're achieving something useful

What's your next step?

We hope you've found this booklet useful, and now have a better idea of whether a career in healthcare science in the NHS is right for you.

If you've decided you do want to work in this area, it's important to start planning ahead straight away. Find out as much as you can about the qualifications you need and the opportunities that are available.

If you need a degree, UCAS can advise on which universities offer the relevant courses. Each university will also be able to tell you what they look for in applicants. For example, getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

If you are already working but are thinking about a change of career, consider volunteering in your spare time. This is a great way to find out if you like the work, and can sometimes lead to a more permanent position.

Here is a checklist of things you should be doing, whether you're still at school, studying for your degree or looking for a change of career:

- Have you explored routes into your chosen career? Will you need a degree or other qualification before you join, or will the NHS train you on the job? (There may also be the opportunity to start as an assistant.)
- Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?
- Have you enquired about opportunities to volunteer or do relevant work experience?
- Have you investigated further qualifications you might need for your chosen role?
- Have you searched the NHS Jobs website or spoken to your local trust to get an idea of the type of vacancies available?
- Make sure you keep up-to-date with any changes to healthcare science education and training opportunities by looking on our website.

Whatever position you're in right now, the NHS Careers service can help point you in the right direction. Call us on 0345 60 60 655, email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk or visit our website at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

To search for jobs in healthcare science, go to www.jobs.nhs.uk, and for more information about professional bodies please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts

CASE STUDY

Name: Emerson Priola

Job title: ophthalmic technician, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust, London

Entry route: trainee ophthalmic technician

Since making the switch from the office job he'd held since school, Emerson is now combining his two main passions – science and helping people.

For me, this is the perfect mix of working with machines and people. From school I had an NVQ3 in engineering, and I'm now using those skills to help people and make a difference in the community, which I'd always wanted to do.

I worked for six months under supervision, until I became proficient in operating the equipment and practised dealing with patients. I now work on my own, running tests and seeing up to 30 people every day. The patients range from children to people in their 90s, so it's important we communicate with each one accordingly.

As ophthalmic technicians we do tests, required by doctors, for a whole range of eye conditions. Many rely on patients telling us what they see, so it's important that we explain exactly what we're doing and what we need from them. This way we get more accurate results, which help with diagnosis and treatment.

With the support of the NHS, I am now continuing my training and education – to develop my skills and my knowledge of this area of medicine.

The dynamics of the eye are fascinating and I really love what I do here. Plus, the fact that I am helping people makes this very rewarding work. I really feel that I have found my place!

With the support of the NHS, I am now continuing my training and education – to develop my skills and my knowledge

Here are some other things you can be doing, depending on where you are right now. For all contact details, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts

Where are you now?	What should you do now?	Who can help?
Studying for GCSEs	• Visit **www.stepintothenhs.nhs.uk** and register for more information on chosen careers. • Check what your likely exam grades/results will be. • Explore routes into your chosen career – will you need a degree or other qualification before you join, or will the NHS train you on the job? Can you start as an assistant? • Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career? • Enquire about volunteering or work experience • Find out if you need any specific A levels, or equivalent qualifications. • Consider the option of a 14–19 Diploma.	Subject teachers Your careers adviser/Connexions service Professional bodies NHS Careers
Studying for A levels or another course at your school or a local college	As GCSEs, plus: • Consider the option of an apprenticeship. • If you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it. • Investigate any further qualifications you might need for your chosen role. • Search the NHS Jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies.	Subject teachers Your careers advisor/Connexions service UCAS NHS Careers Professional bodies
At university	As A levels, plus: • Visit **www.whatcanidowithmydegree.nhs.uk** to find out about career options related to your degree. • Remember there are centralised recruitment schemes for some science graduates to work in the NHS. To find out more, visit **www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/hcstp**	University careers service NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs
Looking for a new career	As A levels, plus: • Find out if you will need to retrain before you apply for new roles or if the NHS will train you while you are working.	Careers/Connexions service (you may have to pay to use these services) NHS Careers Professional bodies Jobcentre Plus NHS Jobs UCAS

FOR FURTHER COPIES OF THIS BOOKLET PLEASE CONTACT:

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