

Interim NHS People Plan: the future healthcare science workforce

Our vision

The healthcare science workforce is unique, specialised and fundamental to clinical decision-making. Healthcare scientists ensure patients receive timely, high quality, cutting-edge care, through providing over a billion diagnostic and scientific investigations, interventions and analyses a year. Their specialist scientific expertise and skills in over 150 service areas of pathology and laboratory science, physiological sciences, data science, bioinformatics, medical physics and clinical engineering provide significant opportunities to support new ways of working.

We will develop a Healthcare Science Workforce Programme to support implementation of the *NHS Long Term Plan* and expand the frontiers of medical science and innovation, introducing new treatment possibilities for 21st century care such as whole genome sequencing, proton beam therapy and CAR-T therapy.

The programme will bring together partners to model and plan the workforce, introducing flexible entry routes, better careers, new roles and ways of working, and competency-based development frameworks. These will underpin flexible and responsive systems of education, training and leadership and build on good practice in the system. The programme will strengthen multiprofessional partnerships across education, training and workforce development to support transferability of skills and knowledge, supporting high quality outcomes and a culture of valuing the workforce.

Through the programme, we will better recognise the valued and essential work of healthcare scientists and allow their unique knowledge, skills and expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to be used more effectively and efficiently. This will be achieved through effective, evidence-based mobilisation of this scientifically trained, agile workforce, ensuring we more rapidly adopt and scale up proven advances in technology and innovation to improve patient care and health outcomes.

We will develop our interim plans further as part of the full People Plan later this year.

Key areas of focus to support the healthcare science workforce

- Improving healthcare science workforce data and analytics: strengthening and co-ordinating workforce intelligence data, informatics and analytics to enable supply and demand modelling, benchmarking of good practice and the linking of workforce commissioning with service delivery requirements and population health management.
- Addressing urgent healthcare science workforce capacity and capability issues through:
 - seeking to increase training commissions and innovative education and training interventions
 - establishing an integrated, diverse scientific leadership infrastructure
 - supporting advanced practice, better skills mix and service transformation by embedding a career framework that permits and supports flexible and innovative development and deployment of the workforce
 - developing and testing new versatile roles to inform new service models in primary and community care
 - developing new education programmes and innovative training models with a focus on quality and accreditation
 - ensuring professional regulation facilitates safe and effective practice, particularly at advanced levels
- Developing a systematic, sustainable recruitment and employment programme for the healthcare science workforce.