



Healthcare Science Week

Day 2 - Trainees, Training & Motivation

Welcome to Day 2!

Today we will be focussing on Trainees, Training and motivation. We're delighted to share articles from Prof. Elaine Cloutman-Green and Martina Burns. In her article, Elaine outlines some tips and advice for any young Healthcare Scientists going through the early stages of their career and Martina gives an insight into Healthcare Science in Northern Ireland and her journey in Healthcare Science.

To complete the day, we have a quote from Dr. Lisa Ayers, Interim Head for the National School of Healthcare Science, who talks about the importance of training within Healthcare Science.

Today's inspirational quote

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”

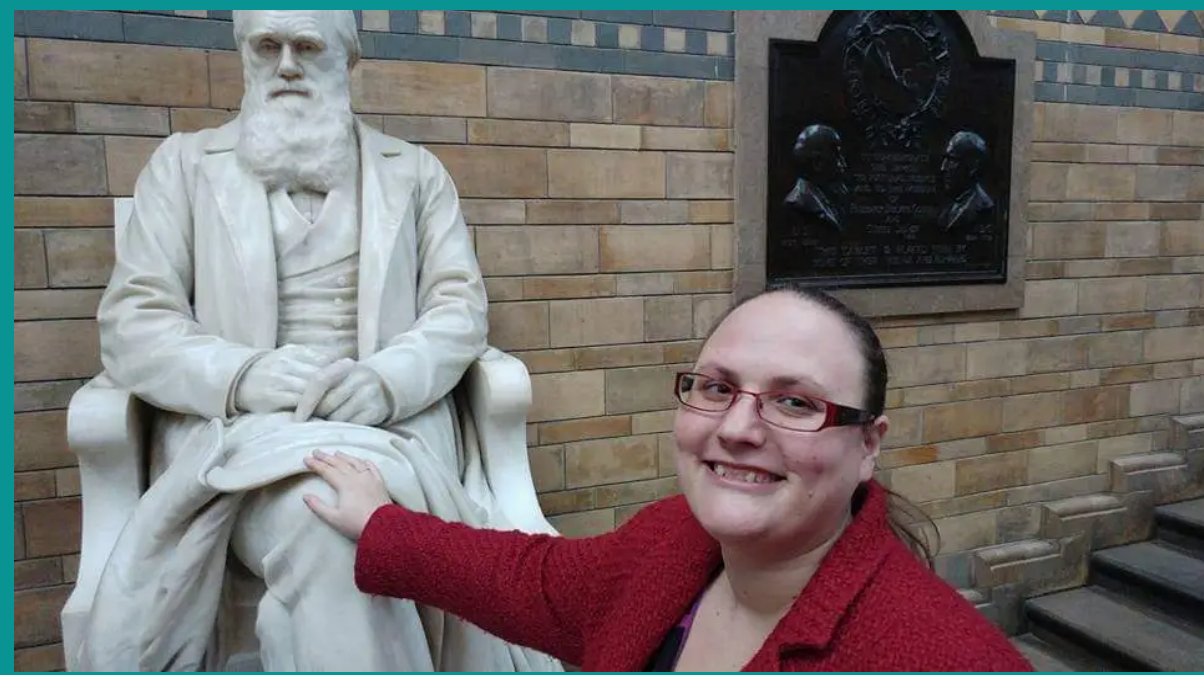
- Robert Collier

An American author of self-help and New Thought metaphysical books in the 20th century.



Professor Elaine Cloutman-Green BEM

A Consultant Clinical Scientist
(Infection Control Doctor) at Great
Ormond Street Hospital for Children
NHS Foundation Trust



Whatever your route, whatever your aspirations, your journey as a Healthcare Scientist is likely to be exactly that, a journey, with a number of steps over a period of years. This can all feel a little daunting, but as someone whose journey took 16 years from start to Consultant, I thought I would share a few things I learnt along the way that helped me in case they help you too.

Have a plan

We are so lucky now that there are so many different options when making career decisions in Healthcare Science. There's flexibility to move between roles, to move between state registered professions, and to enter into non-scientific specialisms like education and leadership. It's great that there is now so much flexibility, but it can also be overwhelming. I would recommend looking into your options, what might you want to do next, what's your longer-term goal, and make a plan to help you work towards that.

Know your why

I hate to say it but plans often never quite come off quite as you imagined. I personally don't think this is a bad thing. I've had so many wonderful opportunities and learnt so much from 'happy accidents' that led me to change or flex my plans for a while. The key thing, I think, is to understand why you made your decisions in the first place, then you can always come back and review opportunities in that light and decide if they are right for you. If you want to work more clinically, it's useful to know what draws you to that and which aspects you really want to embed into your practice. If you want to be a leader, you need to know what that looks like and what it means for you. If you know your why and constantly refer back to it, then decisions and maintaining motivation for your goals becomes so much easier.

Find your cheer squad!

You're not in this alone. There will be so many people there who are ready, willing, and able to help. When you are making your plan, making those original decisions, reach out to colleagues and possible mentors to make sure you have as much information as possible. Develop connections and friendships with your peers, you will be going through so many similar experiences where you can support each other. My personal top tip is to find that one person whom you can have completely open conversations with. The person who you can confide in when you are struggling or losing confidence, the person who will always cheer your success and encourage you to move forward. None of us progress in isolation, we all need help and support sometimes, so find your cheer squad early, and make sure you return the favour to others.

Martina Burns

A Clinical Scientist in neurophysiology, based in Northern Ireland



My name is Martina Burns, I am a Clinical Scientist in neurophysiology, based in Northern Ireland. I have worked for many years in the Belfast Trust, and I am also a member of a regional Healthcare Science steering group in Northern Ireland. I currently co-ordinate trainees in neurophysiology for the trust and have co-ordinated the specialist neurophysiology module within the Health Physiology degree at the University of Ulster - Magee campus.

“What is Healthcare Science like in Northern Ireland?”

Working in Northern Ireland, there are common challenges within Healthcare Science: recruitment and retention of staff. We struggle in these areas due to higher salaries elsewhere and lack of funding and support for CPD, equivalence applications and robust career pathways, leading to the lack of upskilling of senior staff. Despite Northern Ireland falling under the Modernising Scientific Career pathway, which is in place across the UK, we do not have access to apprenticeship funding, the Practitioner training programme (PTP) or the Scientific training programme (STP), for many specialist disciplines.

We sought a regional solution. Following the example of other disciplines, Neurophysiology endeavoured to recruit from generic degrees and train in-house, much like the apprenticeships of old.

“What has worked well?”

The appointment of a co-ordinator role that acts as a bridge between trainees/students/trusts and University's has been extremely useful, (although at present this only applies to cardiac physiology). I have received feedback from staff within the trust and students about the benefits of this and it is apparent that it releases a lot of the burden from clinical staff.

From a neurophysiology point of view, our professional exams remain outside the degree programmes. The advantage for us here is that we can recruit from generic degrees which allows us to add other skills to our profession and protects the future of Neurophysiology in Northern Ireland.

We all appreciate the importance that training has and that training helps maintain robust, high standards; there's nothing like having someone there to ask, “Why are you doing it this way?”, to make you think about why you actually do it that way and promote thinking outside the box and the discovery of new, innovative solutions.

Being a trainer is very rewarding. I personally feel that it allows us to give back, and to future proof our services. This being either to the new recruit or to the existing staff member who want to extend or upkeep their skills. It must continue to be a part of all of our jobs, and we all have something to contribute to better our profession.

“What does the future look like?”

Utilising an existing structured pathway, while we have good pathways for entry within modernising scientific careers, we don't have access to funding for apprenticeship schemes in Northern Ireland, nor do we have access for further learning in the form of accredited post-graduate or HSST training for those staff who want to extend their skills. This is a key opportunity for reform, and to access regional training solutions under this umbrella.

Healthcare scientists have engaged regionally in a steering group to discuss common opportunities. We have engaged with professional Bodies and the Chief Scientific Officer to look for solutions, the Academy for Healthcare science is in process of offering leadership training and support in stakeholder engagement to help to facilitate this. As a group, we are more effective in lobbying for support.

Leadership. The common theme for most is leadership. There is a perception of lack of direction within Healthcare Science, which is failing to translate our needs or requirements for the future of our services into actionable outcomes. The power of good leadership can help create a strong sense of community and direction that can help produce these desired outcomes in the future.

“Training the next generation of Healthcare Scientists is incredibly rewarding and essential for our future clinical services. The experience of supporting others through their learning and development, can motivate us within our own professional roles and remind us of the reasons we wanted to work as a Healthcare Scientist. Thank you to all supervisors, trainers, educators and assessors of Healthcare Scientists who inspire others to join and remain within our amazing profession”.



Dr Lisa Ayers

Interim Head of National School of Healthcare Science
NHSE

