

Audiology

Audiology is about identifying and assessing hearing and balance function and their associated disorders.

You'd work with patients of all ages as part of a team, recommending and providing appropriate therapeutic rehabilitation and management.



Overview

Audiology is a rapidly developing field, and the need for audiological services is clear. A national study of hearing showed that approximately 16% of the population have a significant hearing loss, indicating that working in this field is an important area of the NHS.

Working life

In this area of healthcare science, you could work in areas including:

- paediatrics
- adult assessment and rehabilitation

- special needs groups
- research and development
- teaching

Healthcare science staff in audiology work in a variety of settings, including hospitals and community settings (including the independent sector), where they assess and treat patients. With appropriate further training and development, and depending on their employer, they may reach consultant level. Many operate open referral clinics and may be the only point of contact for the patient.



Some audiologists work in a university, where their job is primarily concerned with teaching and research.

Roles in audiology

There are different roles within audiology that you can consider. These include:

- newborn hearing screener
- hearing aid audiologist
- healthcare science practitioner
- clinical scientist

Newborn hearing screener

As a newborn hearing screener [1] you'd work in neonatal [2] units, postnatal wards, and in hospitals and clinics. You'd be:

- involved in identifying which newborn babies need to undergo a hearing assessment, and, after gaining consent from the parent or guardian, undertaking this assessment using screening equipment
- responsible for making sure that the equipment you're using is working correctly
- recording all the results accurately using various computer systems, and forwarding these to appropriate healthcare staff requiring them
- working as a part of a team including healthcare scientists, neonatal [2] nurses, GPs and health visitors

Hearing aid audiologist

?Hearing aid dispensers (HAD) are fully qualified clinicians who assess hearing and provide aftercare for hearing aids.

Find out more about the role of hearing aid dispensers [3]

Healthcare science practitioner

At a more senior level, working as a healthcare science practitioner, you'd:

- use ways to measure and compensate for hearing loss, including offering the initial therapeutic support and advice, and diagnose audio-vestibular neurological diseases

- work directly with patients, often children or elderly people
- prescribe appropriate hearing aid equipment or arrange onward referral for further investigation
- play both a clinical role and a managerial development role

Clinical scientist

As a clinical scientist working in audiology, you'd:

- have a substantial amount of theoretical knowledge and practical skills about hearing, acoustics and balance
- be able to develop diagnostic protocols, critically interpret and report the results of these procedures
- recommend a care management strategy, for an individual patient, enabling you to solve clinical hearing and balance problems, and when necessary, develop logical alternatives
- be involved in counselling and rehabilitating hearing impaired patients

As a more experienced clinical scientist, you'd generally carry out the non-routine aspects of an audiological service, involving complex hearing and balance computer-based investigations especially where a high degree of competence and responsibility is necessary. This will require background knowledge of the scientific and technological foundation on which hearing science is based and would often involve you acting as a co-ordinator, manager and initiator of service development.

Want to learn more?

- Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required for a career in audiology [4]
- Find out more about the training for a career in audiology [5]
- Pay and conditions

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [6] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Newborn hearing screeners will typically start on AfC [7] bands 2 and 3. As a healthcare science practitioner, you'd usually start on band 5, with opportunities to progress to more senior positions. Trainee clinical scientists train at band 6 level, and qualified clinical scientists are generally appointed at band 7. With experience and further qualifications, including Higher Specialist Scientist Training [8], you could apply for posts up to band 9.

Staff will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern.

Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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With further training or experience or both, you may be able to develop your career further and apply for vacancies in areas such as further specialisation, management, research, or teaching.

You might develop a special interest and expertise in:

- tinnitus [9]
- cochlear implants

- bone-anchored hearing devices
- balance assessment and rehabilitation
- hearing aid dispensing [10]

Wendy Stevens is a clinical learning co-ordinator and senior lecturer in audiology. Read Wendy's story [11]

Sam Varley is an associate director of children's services. Read Sam's story [12]

- Job market and vacancies

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Job market

In November 2018, there were 6,123 clinical scientists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [13].

The NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [14] and Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) [8] attract many more applicants than there are places and so there is considerable competition for places.

Finding and applying for jobs

When you're looking for job or apprenticeship vacancies, there are a number of sources you can use, depending on the type of work you're seeking.

Check vacancies carefully to be sure you can meet the requirements of the person specification before applying and to find out what the application process is. You may need to apply online or send a CV for example.

For the STP [14] and HSST [8], there is an annual recruitment cycle and applications should be made through the National School for Healthcare Science website [15], where you can also find information about the programmes and the recruitment process.

Key sources relevant to vacancies in the health sector:

- vacancies in organisations delivering NHS healthcare can be found on the NHS Jobs website [16]
- opportunities in the Civil Service can be found on the Civil Service Jobs website [17]
- vacancies in local government can be found on the Local Government Jobs website [18] and the Jobs Go Public website [19]
- vacancies for apprenticeships appear on the Gov.uk website [20]
- vacancies for traineeships appear on the Gov.uk website [21]

As well as these sources, you may find suitable vacancies in the health sector by contacting local employers directly, searching in local newspapers and by using the Find a job service [22].

Find out more about applications and interviews [23]

Volunteering is an excellent way of gaining experience (especially if you don't have enough for a specific paid job you're interested in) and also seeing whether you're suited to a particular type of work. It's also a great way to boost your confidence and you can give something back to the community!

Find out more about volunteering and gaining experience [24]

- Further information

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For further information about a career in audiology, please contact:

- Academy for Healthcare Science [25]
- The British Academy of Audiology [26]
- British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists [27]
- Health and Care Professions Council [28]
- National School for Healthcare Science [15]
- UCAS [29]

Other roles that may interest you

- Audiovestibular medicine [30]
- Neurophysiology [31]
- Ophthalmic and vision science [32]
- Dentist [33]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/audiology>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/newborn-hearing-screener>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Neonatal>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/hearing-aid-dispenser>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/audiology/entry-requirements-skills-and-interests-audiology>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/audiology/training-development-and-registration-audiology>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/nhs-higher-specialist-scientific-training>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Tinnitus>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/hearing-aid-dispenser>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/audiology/real-life-story-wendy-stevens>
- [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/audiology/real-life-story-sam-varley>
- [13] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>
- [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/not-studying-health-related-degree/nhs-scientist-training-programme>
- [15] <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/>

- [16] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>
- [17] <https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi>
- [18] <http://www.lgjobs.com/>
- [19] <http://www.jobsgopublic.com/>
- [20] <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
- [21] <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>
- [22] <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>
- [23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/applications-and-interviews>
- [24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience>
- [25] <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk>
- [26] <http://www.baaudiology.org>
- [27] <http://www.bshaa.com/>
- [28] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/>
- [29] <http://www.ucas.com>
- [30] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/audiovestibular-medicine>
- [31] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physiological-sciences/neurophysiology>
- [32] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physiological-sciences/ophthalmic-and-vision-science>
- [33] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dentist>