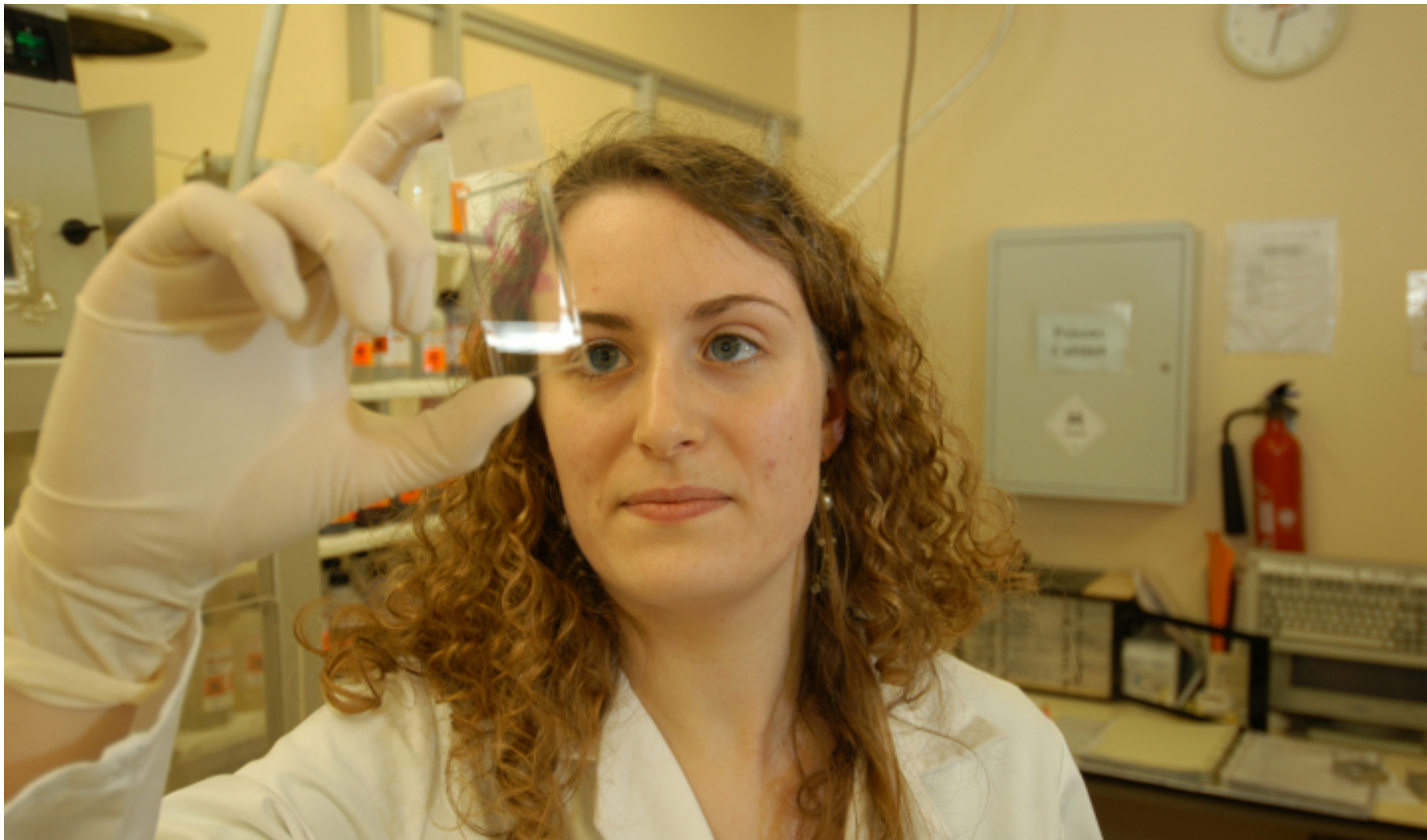


Cellular sciences

Cells are often called the 'building blocks of life' and most are only visible under a microscope.

If you work in cellular science, you'll be a member of the healthcare science team analysing cells in order to identify abnormalities and to interpret what this means for people who are ill.



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Working life

You may study tissues and fluids with a microscope to diagnose and help guide treatment. These investigations could include the examination of preparations made from fluids such as:

- body cavity fluids (including urine)
- sputum
- fluid from cystic lesions
- cerebrospinal fluid
- fine needle [aspiration](#) ^[1] (FNA) cytology of solid lesions.

FNA is an important technique used as a rapid method to determine if a solid lump of tissue is benign or malignant. By extracting some cells from the lump using a syringe and needle, and then examining these under a microscope, healthcare science staff can look for the presence of abnormalities and make a diagnosis.

The use of a fine needle is less painful for the patient and less invasive than a [biopsy](#) ^[2] and it is possible in many instances for a diagnosis to be made in the clinic so that appropriate treatment can be planned at the time, speeding up the treatment that the patient receives.

Who would I work with?

You'll work as part of a team that includes other healthcare science staff working in the life sciences ^[3] (including biomedical scientists ^[4]) and doctors, especially those specialising in pathology ^[5].

Want to learn more?

- Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required to enter a career in cellular sciences ^[6]
- Find out more about the training you'll receive for a career in cellular sciences ^[7]

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Pay and conditions

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) ^[8] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Healthcare science staff working in cellular sciences may earn salaries between [AfC](#) ^[9] bands 5 and 9, depending on the role and level of responsibility. So for example, 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, 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.

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Where the role

can lead

There are opportunities in cellular sciences to develop your career through further study and experience and then apply for roles in management, research, teaching and further specialisation.

Healthcare science staff often work at the forefront of research and innovation, so that patients are continually receiving the very best healthcare. For example, in cellular science, healthcare science staff are researching into such areas as chromosome biology.

Job market and vacancies

Job market information

In November 2018, there were 6,123 clinical scientists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [10].

The NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [11] attracts 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 C.V. for example.

For the NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [11] there is an annual recruitment cycle. Applications usually open in early January for the intake in the following autumn.

Applications for the [STP](#) [12] should be made through the National School for Healthcare Science website [13], where you can also find information about the programme 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 [14]
- Vacancies in local government can be found on the Local Government Jobs website [15] and the Jobs Go Public website [16]

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 Universal Jobmatch tool [17].

Find out more about applications and interviews [18]. [19]

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 [20]. [21]

- **Further information**

For further information about training and working in cellular sciences, please contact:

- Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) [22]
- British Association for Cytopathology [23]
- Health and Care Professions Council [24]
- Institute of Biomedical Science [25]
- National School for Healthcare Science [13]
- Royal College of Pathologists [26]
- UCAS [27]

Other roles that may interest you

- Biomedical science [28]
- Blood sciences [29]
- Clinical biochemistry [30]
- Microbiology (healthcare scientist) [31]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/cellular-sciences>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Aspiration>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Biopsy>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences>

[4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/biomedical-science>

[5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pathology>

[6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/cellular-sciences>

[7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/cellular-sciences/training-development-and-registration>

[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

[9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>

[10] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>

[11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/not-studying-health-related->

degree/nhs-scientist-training-programme

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#STP>

[13] <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/>

[14] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>

[15] <http://www.lgjobs.com/>

[16] <http://www.jobsgopublic.com/>

[17] <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>

[18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/applications-and-interviews>

[19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/offering-career-support/training-and-teaching-resources-young-people/application>

[20] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/i-am-secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience>

[21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience>

[22] <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk>

[23] <http://www.britishcytology.org.uk>

[24] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

[25] <https://www.ibms.org/>

[26] <http://www.rcpath.org/>

[27] <http://www.ucas.com>

[28] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/biomedical-science>

[29] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/blood-sciences>

[30] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/clinical-biochemistry>

[31] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/microbiology>