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- ### Genomic counselling [1]

Genetic counsellors* work directly with patients and families offering genetic/genomic information and support allowing them to make health decisions.

Training and qualifications required

For the NHS Scientist Training Programme you'll need a 1st or 2.1 either in an undergraduate honours degree or an integrated master's degree in a relevant pure or applied science subject. If you have a relevant 2.2 honours degree, you'll also be considered if you have a higher degree in a subject relevant to the specialism for which you are applying. Evidence of research experience is desirable. Experience of working in a caring role (e.g. through previous professional work such as nursing/midwifery or in a voluntary capacity) is highly desirable, and candidates are unlikely to be shortlisted onto the STP without this. As genomic counselling involves working with individuals in emotive circumstances, it can be helpful to spend some time working in similar settings anyway, prior to training to help determine whether this is the right career for you.

Expected working hours and salary range

Genetic/genomic counsellors are covered by Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. As a trainee genetic/genomic counsellor, your starting salary would typically be AfC band 6. Once qualified and working as an autonomous practitioner, you would typically receive a salary at AfC band 7-9. Staff will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. There may occasionally be unsociable hours but this is unusual. Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

A career in genetic/genomic counselling is well suited to those with a strong interest in genetic science but also with well-developed people skills who would prefer to work in a patient-facing role to combine genomics education and counselling. Many of those who apply for the training for genomic counselling have undertaken short counselling courses. You'll need excellent communication and counselling skills to support and empower people at emotionally difficult times as they adjust to the genetic condition in them or their family.

Prospects

With further training, experience or both, you may be able to develop your career and apply for vacancies in areas of further specialism, management, research or teaching. Genetic/genomic counsellors have a structured career progression that takes them to principal and then consultant positions (AfC band 8a-9).

Related roles

- Genomics [2]
- Counsellor [3]
- Clinical bioinformatics (genomics) [4]
- Counselling psychologist [5]

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