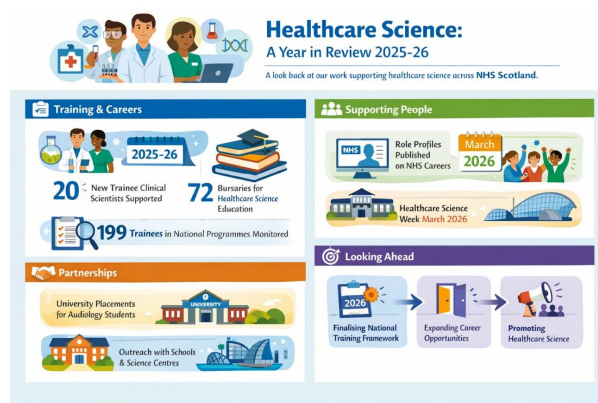


# Healthcare Science – Year in Review 2025–26



## Our role

Leading education and workforce development in Healthcare Science (HCS) across Scotland—supporting inclusive career pathways, widening access, attraction and retention through people-focused partnerships and performance-driven practice.

We will reach this vision by;

- Developing sustainable and standardised education initiatives across HCS
- Quality assuring all HCS training and education
- Promoting and raising the visibility of the HCS Profession
- Supporting Healthcare Scientists to progress their career through the provision of a range of resources
- Commissioning Trainee Clinical Scientists

In addition, Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland Healthcare Science links with UK agencies, Scottish Government, and other stakeholders to represent NHS Scotland's best interests.

## Introduction

Supporting PSD Scotland (Formerly NHS Education for Scotland)

During 2025–26, the Healthcare Science team delivered a wide ranging, nationally coordinated programme of work to strengthen education, support career development, improve visibility of the profession and ensure a sustainable future workforce.

Throughout the year, activity increasingly aligned with the priorities of PSD Scotland, with a strong focus on national consistency, quality assurance, workforce sustainability, digital enablement and widening access.

## Developing HCS Education, Skills, and Competence Framework(s)

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*A major focus of work during **2025–26** was the development of national education, skills and competence frameworks for the Healthcare Science workforce, commissioned by the Scottish Government.*

*These frameworks are designed to:*

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- *Reduce fragmentation across professions*
  - *Ensure consistent expectations across NHS Scotland*
  - *Reflect modern professional practice across clinical, education, leadership and research roles*
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### **During the year 2025 -2026 :**

- Audiology published the first profession specific framework, providing an early exemplar.
- Framework development is in final review and approval stages for Physiological Sciences, Laboratory Sciences, Physical and Imaging Sciences, and Engineering Sciences.
- The Health Informatics Sciences Framework development is underway, recognising the importance of digital and data driven healthcare science roles.

Together, this work lays the foundations for nationally consistent, future focused workforce planning.

## Supporting People at Every Career Stage

Supporting our NHS Scotland workforce, to enter, progress and remain within Healthcare Science was central to activity across the year.

Key highlights included:

- **20** new Trainee Clinical Scientists supported through nationally coordinated training routes.
- Over **70** bursaries awarded across Healthcare Science, supporting learning and progression from support worker through to senior scientist roles.
- Launch of the Healthcare Science undergraduate bursary scheme, supporting Healthcare Science Support Workers to develop academic skills and progress their careers.

By **March 2026**, **199** trainees holding national training numbers were monitored through national quality assurance processes, helping ensure safe, high quality education and training experiences.

## Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Quality assurance remained a core responsibility throughout the year.

In addition to oversight of national training programmes, the team:

- Promoted the NES Healthcare Science Feedback Survey as a national mechanism to capture learner and stakeholder experience.
- Used feedback to support continuous improvement of education and training provision.

This evidence informed approach supports PSD Scotland's commitment to assurance, safety and continuous improvement across NHS education.

## Career Visibility and Public Engagement

Improving understanding of Healthcare Science careers and raising the profession's profile was a significant area of focus in **2025–26**.

Key developments included:

- Refresh of national Healthcare Science career content, aligned to the new workforce nomenclature in ***Healthcare Science in Scotland: Redefining Our Workforce***<sup>1</sup>.
- Ongoing development of career profiles, pathway infographics and digital resources hosted via [hcstraining.nhs.scot](https://www.hcstraining.nhs.scot)<sup>2</sup> and Healthcare science | NHSScotland Careers<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2025/10/healthcare-science-scotland-redefining-workforce/documents/healthcare-science-scotland-redefining-workforce/healthcare-science-scotland-redefining-workforce/govscot%3Adocument/healthcare-science-scotland-redefining-workforce.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.hcstraining.nhs.scot/>

- Planning of new school and college resources, campaign toolkits, virtual experiential learning for university students and digital materials to support national awareness activity.

## Healthcare Science Week 2026

Healthcare Science Week (March 2026) was delivered as a national campaign under the theme ***“The Scientists Behind the Health Service”***.

Activity included:

- National spotlight webinars
- Digital campaign assets
- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Live sessions for primary and early secondary pupils
- Support for NHS Boards to promote local activity and celebration

This work helped improve public understanding of Healthcare Science roles and inspired future interest in the profession.

## Partnerships

Partnership working remained essential to Healthcare Science activity during the year.

The team worked closely with:

- Universities, to support education provision, placements and workforce planning
- Schools, science centres and national education partners, to promote careers and widen access
- Professional groups and national stakeholders, to shape frameworks and resources

A key element of coproduction was the continued work of the Healthcare Science Support Worker (HCSW) Stakeholder Group, bringing together experienced support workers from across Scotland. The group’s insight directly informed national resources, education guidance and progression pathways, ensuring initiatives reflect real service experience and support inclusivity.

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.careers.nhs.scot/explore-careers/healthcare-science/>

## Innovation in Education

Recognising the evolving nature of healthcare delivery, innovation in education featured strongly during 2025–26.

In particular, work to review and enhance genomics education and CPD explored new approaches, including:

- Mapping and signposting existing genomics learning resources
- Piloting virtual reality enabled training with national laboratory participation
- Developing improved digital access to genomics education through interactive dashboards

This work supports future workforce capability in specialist and emerging areas of Healthcare Science.

## Looking Ahead 2026 -2027

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*The work delivered during 2025–26 provides a strong foundation for continued systemwide Healthcare Science workforce development.*

***Looking ahead, towards 2026 -2027, the Healthcare Science team priorities include:***

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- *Finalising remaining profession specific frameworks*
  - *Supporting Scottish Government Healthcare Science strategy in Scotland.*
  - *Embedding frameworks within national education, commissioning and workforce processes*
  - *Continuing to expand career visibility, CPD and public engagement*
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*Together, these activities support PSD Scotland's role as a system leader for education and workforce development, helping ensure Healthcare Science remains visible, valued and ready for the future.*

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