

Healthcare Science Programme

December 2021 Newsletter



Letter from Welsh Government

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to start by saying thank you to everyone for everything you have done and are continuing to do in delivering patient care during these exceptionally challenging times.

Over the past 20 months, our health science services in NHS Wales have been under unprecedented pressure, and our incredibly talented healthcare science workforce have overcome a number of significant challenges in order to continue with their delivery of patient care. The healthcare science workforce have demonstrated their resilience, expertise, flexibility and leadership in responding to the pandemic, and have been instrumental in the rapid adoption of innovation. It can't be said often enough - you should all be extremely proud of the way in which you have adapted and responded to the need to deliver essential services in the safest possible way.

Healthcare science staff have played a critical role in our response to Covid-19 and will continue doing so as we move through the epidemic phase into endemicity and recovery.

Looking forward from here, as we seek to transform the NHS in Wales, we've captured many examples of health science innovation in the [NHS Wales Covid-19 Innovation and Transformation Study](#) I am sure this will lead to sustainable, positive and measurable change. I'm grateful to Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) for hosting and delivering the healthcare science programme, in partnership with the NHS and others, to deliver the actions set out in the healthcare science in [NHS Wales - Looking Forward framework](#).

The healthcare science workforce's professionalism, resilience and flexibility in

responding to the pandemic has really demonstrated our ability to be expert problem solvers and excellent innovators. It has also shown how we can overcome significant challenges and barriers to continue to deliver the very best patient care in often very difficult circumstances. I have no doubt that our evidence based approach to problems and innovation in adversity will help us navigate these most difficult times.

As we enter into what will be another challenging Christmas period, I hope you will be able to find some time to rest knowing that your hard work and determination is helping to improve outcomes for the people of Wales and also know that this too shall pass.

On behalf of all of us here in Welsh Government, may I wish you a happy and safe time, however you spend Christmas and New Year.

See you in 2022!

Best Wishes,

Rob Orford

Chief Scientific Advisor for Health, Welsh Government



Programme news

The Healthcare Science Programme continues to facilitate the delivery of the [healthcare science in NHS Wales 'Looking Forward' framework](#) across the five pillars of workforce and education, research and innovation, culture and integration, service redesign and transformation, quality and safety.

On 22 November, the new Healthcare Science Programme Board met, with members from HEIW, Welsh Government and Directors of Therapies and Health Science. The Programme Board will be integral to the governance of the Healthcare Science Programme moving forwards, enabling agreement on workstream priorities, effective decision-making and monitoring progress across Wales against the healthcare science framework actions.

Consultation has recently ended on the draft recommendations for consultant clinical scientists in Wales. The recommendations were written by the Healthcare Science Network and input on the consultation was sought from individuals across a wide spectrum of professional groups including the medical, nursing and allied health professionals (AHP) as well as workforce and operational development (OD), and planning and finance. Thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation. We were delighted with the response and are working to progress towards publication of this guidance.

The All-Wales neurophysiology model service specification was shared with services and service leads across Wales at a workshop on 2 November with 38 people in attendance. This highlighted the breadth of sub specialities that are supported by neurophysiology and the impact delays can have on our systems and patients. The next stage is to work together to develop actions towards its adoption.

Within HEIW, we have been working closely with the Careers and Communications teams to develop Careersville – an interactive platform to showcase the breadth of careers and pathways available across NHS Wales. The platform successfully launched on 21 October with over 2,800 visitors from a total of 61 schools and colleges across Wales. Careersville is an all-age platform encouraging users to visit each building to gather resources, speak to experts



and gain valuable insight into career opportunities. The development of Careersville will be an ongoing process with professional areas, and information is continually being added. Thank you to everyone who was involved in providing initial content for the healthcare science building – please do get in touch if you are able to support us in continuing to develop this resource to showcase the 50+ professions within healthcare science.

In October, Dr Sarah Bant was invited to deliver a keynote at the National Audiology Cymru Conference, with over 100 delegates in attendance. She presented on the Healthcare Science Programme and the opportunities and developments in Wales in line with the vision of the Welsh Government framework. She also posed a call to action to audiology professionals and services in Wales. In addition to our national healthcare science Cymru webinars and conference, please do contact us if you would like presentations, information or resources for your own professional conferences in Wales.

On 26 November, Samantha Cook left her role as Senior Project Support Officer for the National Healthcare Science Programme. Below is a personal message from Sam: Having been involved in the programme since its early stages in September 2019, I have seen it grow from being part of a small team of two in the NHS Wales Health Collaborative, to now being part of a much wider Workforce Transformation Team in HEIW, with strong support networks from all across the organisation and NHS Wales. A huge thank you to Dee Ripley (Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor in Welsh Government) and Maria Edwards (Programme Manager for the National Healthcare Science Programme) for being simply amazing, supportive and for pushing me constantly. I'm also very grateful to you all, the Healthcare Science Network and

healthcare science workforce in Wales, for teaching me about your incredible profession and helping to shape the programme into what it is today. I am very sad to be leaving the programme, but really pleased with how far it has come. I will continue to champion you all as I move across to nursing and midwifery transformation in HEIW, and I hope our paths cross again in the future!”

We are very appreciative for all the hard work that Sam has done for us over the last two years, and she will be missed.

Healthcare science spotlight sessions

Since our last newsletter we've had two successful spotlight sessions. The session in October was on the NHS Wales Covid-19 Innovation and Transformation Study Report where we shone a spotlight on four of the healthcare science studies included in the report. The November session focussed on healthcare science equivalence in Wales. We were joined by Lynne Smith from the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS), and by healthcare science colleagues who shared their experiences of undertaking equivalence.

The next spotlight session will be held in January where we will be joined by Helen Thomas, Assistant Director of Leadership and Succession in HEIW. Helen will be showcasing leadership opportunities for our healthcare science workforce. [Sign up](#) now to join us on 19 January.

If you are unable to make any of the sessions, all of our spotlight sessions are uploaded to our [healthcare science YouTube playlist](#). You can also find our Animated CV and a variety of videos from our healthcare science colleagues.

Save the date

The Programme Team are currently planning a conference for 22 February 2022 and will be releasing further information shortly. The conference will be an all-day event, jam packed with content from keynote speakers, poster displays, workshops and networking opportunities. [Save the date in your diary](#) and we hope you can join us.

Welcome to the team



We have been lucky enough to have Joseph Droogan join us on the team as an intern. Joseph has been part of HEIW previously and is now going to be working with the national AHP and Healthcare Science Programmes over the coming months. We are so pleased to have Joseph as part of our team, and he has kindly provided us with a blog on his background here:

“Hi! My name is Joseph Droogan and I recently started a year-long internship with HEIW in October 2021. I have been warmly welcomed into the Healthcare Science Programme team for my first posting and look forward to helping them with their communication and engagement plan. It’s an exciting opportunity to be a part of such a

monumental piece of work that helps bring the healthcare science framework for Wales into fruition.

My background is in logistics and in 2019 I started my Masters at Cardiff University in logistics and operations management. During my studies my father was diagnosed with a brain tumour, putting my time at university on hold so that I could take care of him. It was through this experience, and the continuous engagement with the Velindre Cancer Centre and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) that I began to re-evaluate my career direction. Returning to complete my studies, I had a part-time domestic job at my local hospital. I loved every minute of it, and it solidified my decision to pursue a career within the NHS.

It is my goal to join the NHS graduate scheme and this internship is my first step in that direction. HEIW has provided fantastic opportunities for me. The culture and talent that I’m surrounded by is truly inspiring and being able to work with the Healthcare Science Programme team has been an amazing experience so far.

When not in work I have a keen interest in fitness. I recently completed the Manchester marathon and raised over £6,700 for The Brain Tumour Charity.”

Inspire and engage young people in the world of STEM

What can you offer as a STEM professional to help young people with life changing skills, find a fulfilling career path, and help bridge the wide gap between school and the world of work?



You could become a STEM ambassador!

STEM ambassadors are a special network of people whose passion and enthusiasm for their chosen career path is one of the most effective ways to promote a career in Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM).

From your own experience, you often find it was people, whether family, teachers or other contacts that made a difference to your career path. STEM ambassadors reach out to

students of all age groups from reception to advanced level, colleges and community audiences.

You may already be taking part in such events but never registered to have this title and become part of an official networks of STEM communication and inspiration. The programme is;

- free to join
- provides a free enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- light on requirement: one or two events of your choice each year including any provided by your employer.

To read more or register please visit [becoming a STEM ambassador](#).



“I love being a STEM ambassador, thank you for allowing me to talk about one of my passions”



“The ambassadors were excellent and really helped them in future career choices”



Healthcare science journey - Shabaz Ali

We love to share success stories in our newsletter, and this story below from Shabaz was shared on Linked In last month. Congratulations on your degree Shabaz, your passion for your work is inspiring!



“In 2014, I studied a course that I knew nothing about. I did not enjoy it, though, being 19 at the time, I persevered.

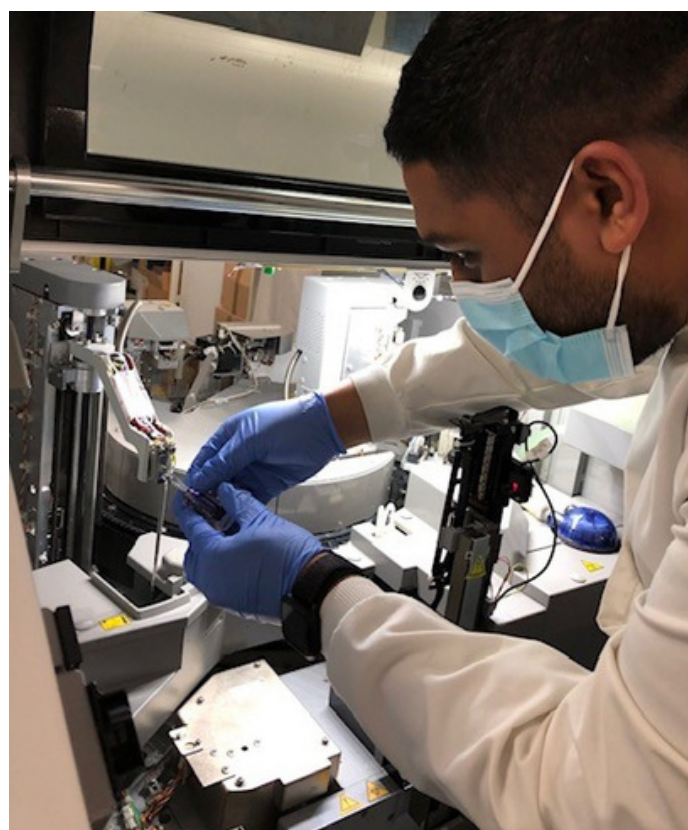
In 2016, I left this course, taking away the knowledge, communication and patient skills developed. With this, I explored different options in education and healthcare. I took on a role as a teaching assistant for students with additional needs, as well as a medical laboratory assistant - both of which I enjoyed, however, the laboratory environment was where I wanted to progress.

In 2017, I took on a secondary role in ABUHB as a health records clerk, where I took part in the digitising health records project, deepening my understanding of healthcare ‘behind the scenes’.

In 2018, I began the healthcare science course at Cardiff Metropolitan University, accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science. During this course, I worked part-time as a medical laboratory assistant in ABUHB building up my laboratory experience throughout my studies.

In 2021, I am now registered with The Health and Care Professions Council as a Biomedical Scientist in ABUHB. Over the last seven years, I have helped cancer patients and students with additional needs directly face-to-face. Now, although I have lost the direct face-to-face contact, I am helping all kinds of people and still making an impact to their pathway.

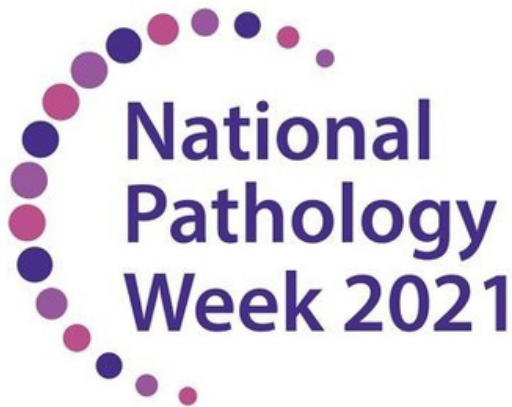
Overall, I found my potential and had a great time at Cardiff Metropolitan University. I received this proud achievement in the post yesterday, hence this reflection! A First Class Honours degree. Hopefully, many more achievements to follow.”



National Pathology Week 2021

National Pathology Week ran from 1 to 7 November 2021 and it was celebrated widely by the pathology workforce across Wales.

To mark National Pathology Week, Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) pathology, organised a series of engagement events to promote pathology services and biomedical science, all under the week's theme #AllTogetherNow.



Pathology staff manned stands on all four hospital sites where they were able to engage with health board colleagues, patients and visitors to the hospitals. This was an excellent opportunity to answer numerous queries around best practice for completion of specimen containers and forms, what happens to samples and career opportunities.

The SBUHB pathology twitter account was active throughout the week promoting Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Job opportunities and twitter take-overs, by staff from different areas of pathology, proved very popular. Mortuary staff, clinical scientists, biomedical scientists and support staff all provided an insight into their working day.

The team also welcomed Riley from Harvey's Gang ([Harvey's Gang | Helping children understand their healthcare \(harveysgang.com\)](https://harveysgang.com)) to the department where Riley and his mum had a tour of haematology and biochemistry. Riley followed samples around the sections and had the opportunity to look at blood films and operate analysers under the watchful eye of our experienced biomedical scientists. Riley's mum reported that "he was pleased to see everything that happens to his blood samples and he is happy to know what they do to check the samples to find out what is wrong".

Following Riley's visit, pathology staff across all sites took part in a sponsored walk around the hospital. Wearing plastic aprons decorated to promote National Pathology Week, staff enjoyed the opportunity to focus on their wellbeing and were also able to raise £150 for Harvey's Gang and Blood Bike Wales.



To finish off the week, Swansea Bay UHB held a pathology wide quiz. Staff formed teams based on site, discipline and area of work, with biochemistry at POW taking the win! Kimberly Lewis, Specialist BMS in clinical biochemistry at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend reported 'After the events there was a huge boost of morale in each department. Staff particularly liked the walk around the hospital and the departmental Kahoot! quiz. In an effort to promote staff



wellbeing, the management have agreed to routine departmental engagement events such as these to further support staff wellbeing. Overall, this was a successful event with positive outcomes'.

You can look back on their celebrations and stories via the [SBUHB pathology twitter](#) page.

The All Wales conference: A Healthier Wales: Moving Forwards together and Advancing Healthcare Awards (AHA) awards

The All Wales Conference and Advancing Healthcare Awards took place on 25 and 26 November and it was a fantastic event. The conference programme included talks from Health and Care Research Wales, HEIW and Welsh Government, with a number of break out sessions in the afternoon. These were led by individuals from across the AHP and healthcare science community in Wales.

Huge congratulations to the winners and well done to all of those shortlisted for the awards; the standard once again was exceptionally high. Healthcare science had some fantastic winners including:

- HEIW's award for the outstanding student project which helps Wales move forwards together: Dr Benjamin Johns - Trainee Clinical Scientist at Public Health Wales, for his project on the introduction of molecular technology for foodborne infectious disease outbreaks at Public Health Wales.
- HEIW's award for leadership and change management: Megan Fealey - Genomics Implementation Officer at the All Wales Medical Genomics Service.
- Blue Prism's award for digital and technology innovation and overall winner for healthcare science: WINGS rapid genome sequencing for critically ill children at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB).

If you missed out on the opportunity to nominate your colleagues for one of these prestigious awards, there will be opportunity to be recognised at the UK Advancing Healthcare Awards on 8 April 2022. This event will be at the Victoria Park Plaza in London, and you can find more information via the [AHA website](#).

Let's get nominating our colleagues and showcase our amazing workforce on a national stage.

Medical illustration team turn teaching idea into reality at SBUHB! (this article was initially published by SBUHB)



Swansea Bay's Medical Illustration Department is using virtual reality to teach new doctors a real life or death technique. The department has teamed up with Swansea University to produce a virtual reality (VR) training app that helps perfect a potentially lifesaving technique, known as the Valsalva manoeuvre, to correct an abnormal cardiac rhythm, called Supraventricular Tachycardia (SVT), on a virtual patient.

The app includes the medical procedure for practice, an introduction to VR for those new to the technology and an online dashboard with performance analytics. It was designed for standalone headset use, allowing for a seamless training experience with no cables. When using the app, the trainee is guided through each step of the

manoeuvre, there is also a questionnaire pre and post procedure to assess their knowledge.

The project was kindly funded by the Swansea Bay Health Charity. Steve Atherton (pictured above), Deputy Head of SBUHB's Medical Illustration, played a lead role in the app's development. Steve turned to Swansea University for help and after contacting Dr Marc Holmes, a Virtual Reality MSc course lecturer, his Morriston Hospital based team were put in contact with two MA students, Joe Charman and Jack Bengeyfield, who had set up their own software studio, Pilot Plus.

Read more on this potentially life saving technique and how the idea developed into fruition on the [Swansea Bay UHB website](#).

Meet the scientist

The NHS has a strong tradition of nurturing the brightest and best healthcare scientists. We are so proud to celebrate the fantastic scientists we have working day-in-day-out to deliver high quality care for all.

Nathan Humphries is a Medical Technical Officer in the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory in Public Health Wales. Read about Nathan's journey here:

Tell us about your healthcare science role.

I perform microbiological testing on a range of foods, waters and environmental samples within a public health laboratory. We test both proactively (routine testing) and reactively (to support an investigation or outbreak control). We test hospital food and food from local authority environmental health departments for food-borne pathogens such as Salmonella and Listeria. We test hospital water for water-borne pathogens such as Legionella and Pseudomonas. We test medicines produced by the local health board to ensure its safe to be used on our patients. All these tests are performed to identify microbiological contamination to protect patients and the wider public.

What do you enjoy about your role?

I enjoy the different aspects of the work we do at the laboratory. One day you could be working with water samples and possible links to clinical Legionnaire's disease outbreaks, the next day you could be testing sandwiches from a local supermarket to ensure they are fit for human consumption.

What are your career ambitions?

To carry on what I am doing – and if possible do it a bit better. Maybe it's not too late for me to make it to a food examiner.

How did you get here?

I have held various working roles throughout my life including the construction trade, working for British Airways, a police officer for a short time before doing an Applied Biological Sciences degree as a mature student, and a couple of jobs later I ended up



where I am now. I wasn't sure that I would be able to find a job in a medical / public health setting with a general science degree.

What sort of person would your job role suit?

Someone who enjoys a more varied aspect of the application of their science skills.
Someone who enjoys the satisfaction that they are having an impact on and maintaining the wider public's health and wellbeing.

Let's shout out from the rooftops about the amazing work that you do. If you would like to get involved in our 'meet the scientist' section, please get in touch with the team on HEIW.HCS@wales.nhs.uk.

We need you!

We continue to work with the profession to raise the profile of healthcare science in NHS Wales and enable the vision of "one voice" approach. To this aim, please do use the [communication toolkit](#) infographic and animated CV for your purposes.

We are eager to reach as many members of the 50+ professions which make up our healthcare science community in Wales as possible. Please encourage colleagues to get involved by:

- visiting our [webpage](#)
- following us on social media: @HCS_Cymru / #HCS_Cymru
- signing up to our [mailing list](#)
- completing our ['job profile' questionnaire](#)

Our team can also be contacted directly at: HEIW.HCS@wales.nhs.uk

And finally...

We would like to personally thank our amazing healthcare science workforce for your extraordinary contribution this year. Your professionalism and effort has never been more vital or more valued. You are all living up to your reputation for being brilliant, flexible and hardworking.

Let's look forward and inspire a new generation of healthcare scientists. Thank you again for the tireless efforts you have and will continue to make.

Seasons greetings and best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

