

Healthcare Science Programme

July 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of the National Healthcare Science newsletter.

During these challenging times, our healthcare scientists up and down the country have been vital in supporting the fight against COVID-19. Your response to this pandemic epitomises the flexibility, skills and dedication of our workforce. This is only the beginning - our roles, profile ability to re-purpose will continue into the foreseeable future, and it is imperative that you are recognised for your incredible efforts.

Since March, the focus of the National Healthcare Science Programme has shifted to support the COVID-19 pandemic. However the intention is for our programme work to resume imminently and we are excited to progress the actions within our "Looking Forward Framework". We have seen our healthcare scientists embrace innovation and share learning across Wales over the past few months and we will utilise this for resilience planning for the future.

A big shout out and THANK YOU to all our healthcare scientists!



Meet the Healthcare Scientist

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

In each edition of our newsletter, we will be shining the spotlight on our amazing healthcare scientists. In our first 'Meet the...' series, we are starting with Dr Ben Johns who is a Trainee Clinical Scientist in Microbiology at Public Health Wales.



Tell us a bit about yourself?

I am a Trainee Clinical Scientist in Public Health Wales. I joined Public Health Wales after completing my PhD in Cardiff Metropolitan University as I wanted to apply my skills and knowledge in a clinical setting to improve and deliver good quality patient care. My PhD involved looking at antibiotic-resistant organisms (known as Small Colony Variants) to investigate phenotypic and genotypic differences between them and their wild-type progenitors. Before this, I completed my BSc and MSc in Biomedical Science.

I also volunteer as a Special Inspector with South Wales Police. Public Health Wales have been very supportive of my volunteer

endeavours and recognise the opportunities for transferable skills.

Tell us about your healthcare science discipline?

In Microbiology, we process a range of samples from patients across Wales for bacterial, viral, fungal and parasitic infections. We primarily receive swabs, blood, urine, pus, faeces, sputum and tissue samples. Our Food, Water and Environment laboratories also process a range of samples from hospitals, environmental health and private companies (such as water companies) for routine surveillance and outbreak investigation purposes. Currently, much of the Microbiology workforce has been directed to support SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 testing as part of the national response to the global emergency.

What achievements are you most proud of?

My main achievements so far have been the completion of my PhD in Biomedical Science / Medical Microbiology. This was a significant milestone in my career and had been something that I had aspired to for some time. Gaining my PhD granted me Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science and has given me the specialist skills and knowledge that can now be applied to improve patient care.

What's the best thing about your job?

The people. I am fortunate to work as part of a wide multi-disciplinary team including Biomedical Scientists, Medical Laboratory Assistants, Associate Practitioners, Medical Technical Officers, Medical Doctors, Clinical Scientists, Health Protection professionals and Epidemiologists who are all passionate and dedicated about delivering excellent quality patient care. Although Healthcare Scientists can often be overlooked as the role is typically not 'patient-facing', we are involved in over 80% of all clinical diagnoses that impact on patient care.

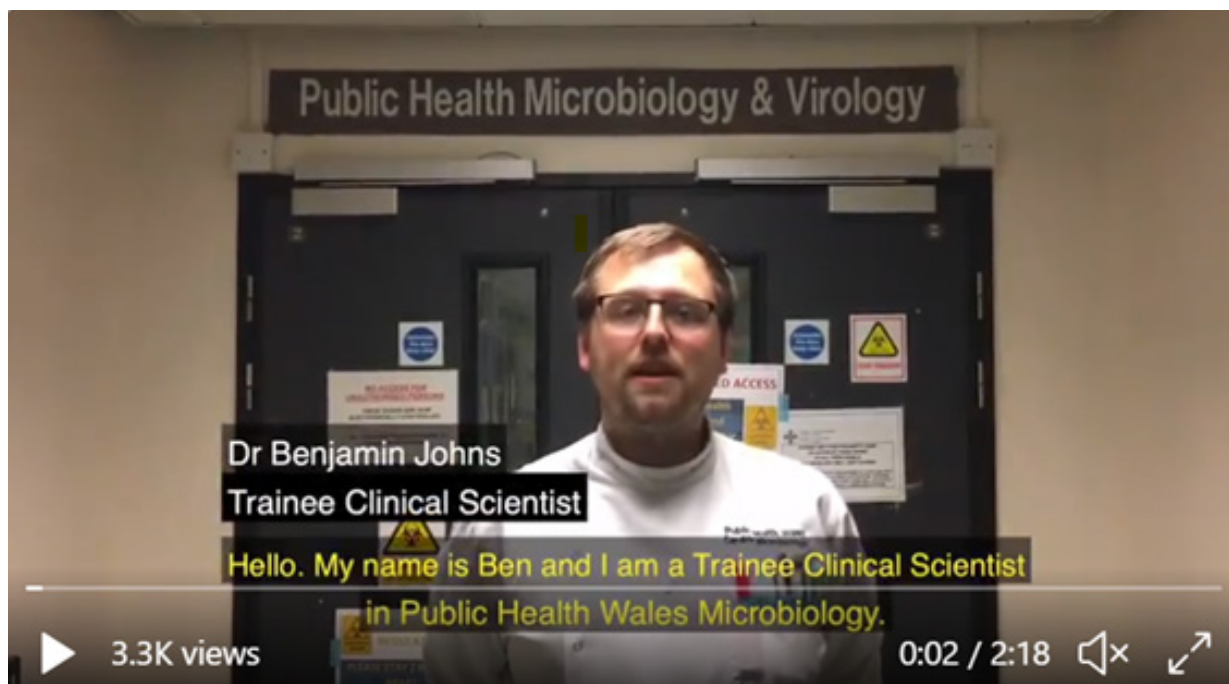
Who has inspired you as a healthcare scientist?

Starting at Birchgrove Comprehensive School, Dr Sian Burton shared her passion for science and inspired me to continue my science studies into Further Education. At Gorseinon College, Dr Ruth Vincent, my Chemistry Lecturer, introduced me to the subject of 'Biomedical Science' when supporting my UCAS application. At University, Professor Rose Cooper and Dr Anna Dorel supervised my Bachelor's and Master's degree research projects and encouraged me to consider applying for a PhD.

Dr Sarah Maddocks, my PhD supervisor was a significant influence on my career development as she introduced me to independent research, writing publications, presenting at conference and public outreach activities. I am now supervised by Dr Catherine Moore, a Consultant Clinical Scientist, and Lisa Chichester, a Laboratory Manager, here at Public Health Wales. They both continue to support my career development and are role models for me to aspire to in clinical leadership and laboratory management roles respectively.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to recognise the staff at the Wales Specialist Virology Centre, who, under the leadership of Jonathan Evans as Lead Biomedical Scientist & Operations Manager have set up and delivered a world-class national Coronavirus testing service for Wales. Each and every one of them, in all roles and at all grades have all inspired me to continue developing as a Healthcare Scientist to enable me to contribute towards the delivery of excellence in laboratory practice and patient care. I hope that one day I too am fortunate enough to have the opportunity to lead and develop others

Watch this fabulous video Ben has created explaining the efforts and involvements of healthcare scientists in the current global pandemic.



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 Sam on samantha.cook3@wales.nhs.uk.

Innovation and Skills Utilisation Log & AHA Esteem

We are so proud of our healthcare scientists up and down the country, helping with the COVID-19 crisis in the most amazing way. It has set us and others to think about ways we could shine a spotlight on the amazing work that's going on, often requiring people to move into new roles and develop new skills.

To capture novel ways of working and innovation within our health boards and trusts, we have been asking our Healthcare Scientists to populate an 'Innovation and Skills Utilisation Log'. This will provide us with an invaluable tool for resilience planning in the future. We will also share this data with the ABUHB innovation project to be included in that piece of work.



If you have not yet contributed to this, please complete the template and return to maria.edwards2@wales.nhs.uk.

In addition, Chamberlain Dunn have launched 'Advancing Healthcare Esteem', where they are seeking nominations from our Advancing Healthcare awards community. It will be an ongoing recognition scheme which they will run as long as it's appropriate. If you would like to make a nomination go to <https://ahawards.co.uk/esteem/>.

Biomedical Science Day 2020

The 11th June saw colleagues from Biomedical Science come together to celebrate Biomedical Science Day 2020 albeit in a slightly different way to previous years.

Rather than providing physical information via stands in hospitals or inviting people on a tour of the laboratories, biomedical scientists across the country took over social media to promote and celebrate the work that they do.



The team at Public Health Wales Microbiology at the University of Wales Hospital, Cardiff created a video that explains the different types of roles that make up the Biomedical Science discipline.

Credit: [IBMS South East Wales Branch](#)



The Swansea Public Health Wales team also created a great video providing a snapshot into the Swansea Biomedical Science department and what they do on a daily basis.

Credit: [Kirsten Winterburn](#)

To see more of the fabulous content shared across social media on Biomedical Science Day 2020 you can check out the following:

- The [Institute of Biomedical Science website](#) has lots of resources including children's activity sheets, informative posters and pictures from Biomedical Science Day 2020
- The hashtag [#BiomedicalScienceDay2020](#) on Twitter where colleagues from across the UK celebrated their success, and shared information relating to Biomedical Science

A thank you from...

Christine Morrell - Deputy Director of Therapies and Health Science, Swansea Bay UHB



There has been many exciting developments and we are so proud of everything that has been achieved in Swansea Bay over the last few months. Here is a run down of just a few of the achievements:

- Heidi Maggs (Laboratory Medicine Manager) and the laboratory medicine team have successfully led a the roll-out of COVID-19 antibody testing for education staff and healthcare workers. The laboratory team are processing thousands of samples a day and this will contribute to the understanding of the disease and its spread.
- Chris Bowden (Laboratory Service Manager) and Keith Owen (Mortuary Manager) have been front and center of developing plans to meet the excess death rates during the peak of the pandemic. A team of Biomedical Scientists took on flexible roles as “mortology” staff and undertook a whole new set of competences and skills to help when they were most needed.
- The Cellular Pathology team have made great strides in advancing the developments of Digital Pathology and this will help in further modernisation of the service.

The Audiology team in Swansea Bay have also had an impact on service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Swansea Bay UHB comms team spoke to four audiology staff who swapped “Hearing Tests to Aiding the NHS Frontline” and volunteered their services to train as healthcare support workers and help out the teams at Gorseinon Hospital within a matter of days!

Rhys Meredith (Head of Audiology) spoke about how proud he was of his staff:

“I remember asking the team whether they would be prepared to help during this challenging time, and they all immediately said yes. Having been made to feel so welcome by the staff and patients at Gorseinon, they don’t appear to be in any rush to come back to audiology! But on a serious note, myself and their colleagues are so very proud of them, they stepped up as soon as they were asked.”

You can read the experiences from Jayne Tayler, Sally Mora, Richard Perdue and Tim Loescher on the [Swansea Bay UHB site](#).

Clinical engineering

As we see the NHS ‘stress tested’ like never before, it’s already emerging that having immediate access to reliable, concise and up to date information (including learning from others’ experiences so as not to ‘reinvent the wheel’) is vitally important.

We have been working with Professor Colin Gibson - Chair of Clinical Engineering PSG, to create a central document library where latest device risk management and governance information relating to the response of Clinical Engineering Services to COVID-19 is stored.

Some of you may have already accessed the COVID-19 Clinical Engineering folder on SharePoint and we would welcome your thoughts and feedback on the information being provided. If you have not accessed this and wish to do so, please request access through [this link](#). The folder is updated regularly, and we provide those on our access list with a weekly update of the newly added information.

We’d like to thank Colin for all of his hard work on this.



We need your help

We would love to replicate 'a day in the life' with our Healthcare Scientists and disseminate your videos via this newsletter and our twitter account [@HCS_Cymru](https://twitter.com/HCS_Cymru). We can't guarantee our scientists overnight fame, however this is an excellent opportunity to work together not only to increase the visibility of our profession and the highlight the critical roles within it, but also to inspire and enthuse individuals to begin or progress their careers within healthcare science.

It doesn't need to be anything fancy or professionally made - if you have a smartphone, then you have a magical video creating device right in your hand! Email samantha.cook3@wales.nhs.uk to get involved!

Health for Health Professionals

Health for Health Professionals Wales is a free, confidential service now available to all Health Professionals and Healthcare Students working in NHS Wales. This includes you as healthcare scientists! Follow the [Health for Health Professionals link](#) for more information.



Healthcare Science in BMJ Article

The British Medical Journal posted an article on 8th June 2020 titled 'COVID-19: Trainee healthcare scientists are crucial to surviving the long road ahead' that may be of interest to you. You can find the full article below:

COVID-19: THE LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

Covid-19: trainee healthcare scientists are crucial to surviving the long road ahead

Jaidev Kaur Chandan research and data associate, Jane Lynch scientist training programme director, Graham Wilson training programme director for undergraduate and apprenticeship education, Christal Fisher curriculum manager, Boota Singh end-point assessment manager, Lisa Ayers higher specialist scientist training programme director, Sandie Gay head of assessment and research evaluation, Berne Ferry head

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