



STUDENT BRIEF

DESIGN A RECRUITMENT STRATEGY FOR HEALTHCARE SCIENCE CAREERS

NHS England

Summary

NHS England plans, funds and supports healthcare across the country. We rely on healthcare scientists in labs, clinics and physics teams to help diagnose and treat patients, but we're short in areas like audiology, medical physics and pathology. I'd like you to design a practical recruitment and outreach plan that gets more 16–24 year olds to consider these careers, including routes like T Levels, apprenticeships and the Practitioner Training Programme (PTP). You'll finish with a clear strategy a local NHS Trust could pick up and run with, backed by public evidence.

KEY WORDS

NHS workforce, healthcare science, audiology, medical physics, pathology, recruitment strategy, apprenticeships, T Levels, Practitioner Training Programme, PTP, outreach, social media, school partnerships, careers fairs, benchmarking, metrics, UK

INDUSTRY

Healthcare, Public sector, Education and Training

FOCUS

- Shortage hotspots in healthcare science
- What 16–24 year olds think about these careers
- Low-cost channels that actually reach young people
- T Levels, apprenticeships and PTP explained clearly
- A simple playbook Trusts can reuse

Brief

I work in the healthcare science workforce team at NHS England. We need more young people to choose careers in our labs, clinics and physics departments, but awareness is low and we lose people to other sectors. The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan points to growing apprenticeships and training routes, yet many sixth formers haven't heard of healthcare science or think it's "just doctors and nurses".

Here's the challenge: design a cost-aware strategy a Trust could use to attract





16–24 year olds into healthcare science roles, with messages and routes that feel real and reachable.

1) Map the problem using public sources. In 1–2 pages, summarise where shortages bite (e.g. audiology, medical physics, pathology) and why. Use NHS workforce stats, NHS Staff Survey findings, HSJ pieces, DfE/UCAS data and professional bodies. Pull out factors like retirements, limited training places, competition from private providers or tech firms, and low awareness of routes (T Levels in Health/Science, Level 4–6 apprenticeships, PTP BSc degrees, and the STP postgraduate route). Reference everything with links.

2) Understand the audience. Find what 16–24 year olds value in early careers: pay, purpose, progression, flexible study, location. Use public youth surveys, UCAS/IFS reports, Gatsby Foundation and Careers & Enterprise Company resources. Draft 2–3 simple personas (e.g. college student on a Science T Level; Year 13 choosing between uni and a degree apprenticeship; career switcher at 20) with their barriers and what would win them over.

3) Benchmark what works elsewhere. Analyse 3–5 examples from big UK recruiters of young people (for instance RAF/Armed Forces, Network Rail, Police, GSK, NHS nursing). Capture tactics with proof: shortform video “day in the life”, school talks plus hands on demos, paid social with clear calls to action, virtual work experience, T Level industry placements (315 hours). Screenshot or link to campaigns and note costs where public.

4) Your strategy and playbook. Propose a 12week pilot a Trust could run on a modest budget. Include:

- Target roles/specialties and the right entry routes.
- Core messages that bust myths and show pay, training and progression plainly.
- Channel plan (Instagram/TikTok, sixthform/college partnerships, careers fairs, Healthcare Science Week, virtual tasters).
- A simple content pack: 5 post ideas with captions, one A4 flyer outline, and a slide for a school talk.
- Clear calls to action (e.g. NHS Jobs alerts, UCAS PTP courses, local apprenticeship expression of interest form).
- Basic costs and who would do what in a Trust.

5) Measure and learn. Set 5–7 metrics a Trust can track without special systems: event signups, QR/shortlink clicks to NHS Health Careers pages, enquiries, placement offers, applications started. Show how you’d review results and tweak the plan.

A strong piece will be 1,000–1,500 words or slides, wellstructured, with 2–3+ cited sources and ideas that a real Trust could try next term. Please note any assumptions you’ve made. Thanks.

