

Healthcare Science in Scotland

Chief Scientific Officer Update

December 2025



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Message from the Chief Scientific Officer for Scotland

Professor Catherine Ross

As we approach the end of 2025 I wanted to thank you all for your continued hard work in what I know has been a challenging year for you all.

You, our scientific workforce, continue to provide exceptional care and treatment to the people of Scotland every day. For that I give my sincere thanks to you all.

This year has seen outstanding successes for healthcare science in Scotland. We have seen the launch of a new paper as part of our strategic development of healthcare science, but more importantly we have seen colleagues recognised on a national platform for their accomplishments.

Together we continue to raise the visibility of, and highlight the critical importance of, our profession. That is something we will continue to do as we enter the new year, and beyond.

I hope that all of you are able to take some time to rest over this festive period, and spend time with family and friends. To those of you who are celebrating, I would like to wish you a very merry Christmas.

Thank you again and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2026.

Celebrating Success for Healthcare Scientists

Scotland's Health Awards 2025 were held in Edinburgh this year, and for the first time in the history of the Awards healthcare scientists were recognised in their very own category.

The Healthcare Scientist Award honours individual healthcare scientists in Scotland who have demonstrated excellence and made a significant impact on patient health and wellbeing. Using specialist knowledge and advanced science, these scientists support prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of conditions, playing a vital role within NHS or healthcare organisations.

Finalists in these prestigious awards, were Dr Ruth Brotherstone (NHS Lothian); Jody Forster (NHS Lothian); Laura Jess (NHS Lothian); Samantha Stredwick (NHS Lothian).

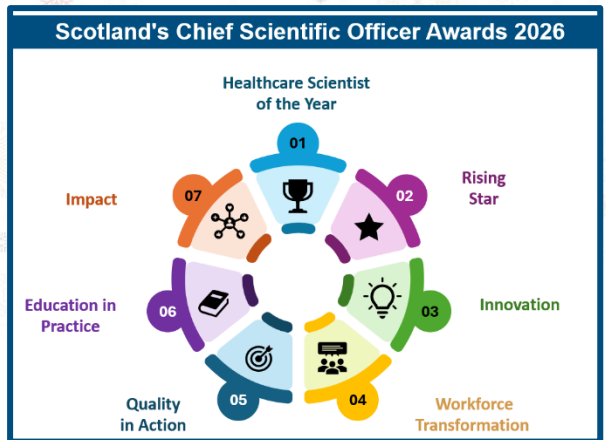
The award was won by Laura Jess, Head of Paediatric Respiratory and Sleep Physiology at NHS Lothian, in recognition of her transformational leadership in healthcare science. The Chief Scientific Officer announced the winner and the trophy was presented by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Neil Gray MSP.



Chief Scientific Officer's Awards 2026

The Chief Scientific Officer's Awards will return for 2026. Nominations are now open and will close on Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 15:00.

These awards are an opportunity to celebrate the skills and expertise of our scientific workforce, and to recognise the positive impact healthcare scientists have on the delivery of services and positive outcomes for Scotland's population.



This year you can nominate your team, your colleagues or yourself in the following categories:

Healthcare Scientist of the Year; Rising Star; Innovation; Workforce Transformation; Quality in Action; Education in Practice; Impact.

More information, including nomination criteria and the nomination form can be found at the link:

[Chief Scientific Officer's Awards 2026](#)

New Healthcare Science Professional Adviser to the Scottish Government

We are delighted to welcome Karen Brazier as a new Healthcare Science Professional Adviser to the Scottish Government.

Karen joins the Scottish Government team from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde where she was the Healthcare Science Professional Lead for the Health Board.



A highly experienced Biomedical Scientist with a specialist background in Clinical Biochemistry, Karen brings a deep understanding of healthcare science and a strong commitment to advancing the profession across Scotland.

In her role, Karen provides advice to support the development of the Scottish Government's Strategic Approach to Healthcare Science, and in her first few months has already been pivotal in supporting the finalisation and publication of the latest paper in the 'Healthcare Science in Scotland' series '[Redefining our Workforce](#)'.

Healthcare Science in Scotland: Redefining Our Workforce

The Scottish Government has published a new paper which aims to redefine the healthcare science (HCS) workforce in Scotland to ensure it is visible, valued, and empowered so that it can better meet the evolving needs of the population and health system now and in the future.



'Healthcare Science in Scotland: Redefining Our Workforce' sets the framework for how we expect NHS Boards to apply consistent naming conventions across the scientific workforce on HR systems. For the first time in Scotland, this will enable the collection of nation-wide robust and accurate data on the scientific workforce. In turn, this will support future planning and decision making

around key areas such as planning for workforce and education. Implementation is underway and more updates will follow in the future as work progresses.

Healthcare Science in Scotland: Redefining Our Workforce (cont.)

As part of this work, the Scottish Government has instructed all NHS Boards to introduce a substantive 'Scientific Director' post. This is in recognition that dedicated leadership for healthcare science is essential to ensure that the profession's expertise informs decisions that directly impact quality and safety across the NHS.



The paper was informed by the collective insight and expertise of our healthcare science community, through roundtables, direct engagement and a short life working

group made up of colleagues from across service.

This collegiate approach has helped build a clearer, more unified identity for the profession - one that strengthens visibility, supports leadership, and enhances the impact of healthcare science across the NHS in Scotland.

Get in Touch

We are always interested to hear about the positive work that is happening in teams across the NHS in Scotland, and would encourage you to share anything new and exciting that is happening in your area of work.

Looking ahead to Healthcare Science Week 2026 (starting Monday 9 March) we would like to promote, and get involved in, as much activity as possible. Please let us know if you have any activity planned so we can help spread the word and make next year our most successful Healthcare Science Week yet.

Contact details can be found below.

Healthcare Science in Scotland

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