



UK Government

**THE UK'S MODERN
INDUSTRIAL
STRATEGY**

LIFE SCIENCES

Jobs Plan
Place-Based Case Studies



Annex B: Place-based case studies

Scotland

Scotland's Life Sciences sector is delivering a range of targeted skills and workforce initiatives. The Life Sciences Strategy for Scotland 2035 Vision, published in November 2025, includes a dedicated "Building Skills and Talent" workstream, and its Sprint 1 Delivery Plan (March 2026) prioritises skills development as a foundation-building action for 2026–27.

The Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC), based at the University of Strathclyde, delivers collaborative training programmes at HND, MSc, and PhD level, developed in partnership with Scottish universities and industry. Its collaborative PhD programme pairs doctoral researchers with industry partners to ensure research aligns with commercial needs and builds sector-ready skills. IBioIC also provides hands-on bioprocessing CPD through its FlexBIO facility at Heriot-Watt University and is co-developing an advanced good laboratory practice course with Fife College to address practical skills gaps in the workforce.¹

The Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC), coordinated by the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, supports SMEs and larger employers across Scotland to navigate and access the apprenticeship system for the advanced therapies and vaccines sector. ATAC and the Scottish Advanced Therapies and Vaccines Network co-host a Scottish Network Event in Edinburgh, bringing together employers, apprentices, and training providers to promote uptake and discuss future skills needs. ATAC has also recently expanded its apprenticeship pathways – through the Innovate UK-funded Industry Skills Accelerator – into RNA and oligonucleotide therapies, digital and automation, quality, and manufacturing, directly addressing priority skills gaps identified by employers.²

Additionally, Glasgow City Region's £50 million Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, awarded by the UK Government through UKRI in 2025, targets the region's Health and

Life Sciences cluster. Of the total, £5 million is allocated to a dedicated Cluster Skills Programme to address current and future workforce needs across the sector, complementing £25 million for R&D commercialisation and £20 million to tackle a shortage of laboratory infrastructure. The fund operates through a "triple helix" model of partnership between civic institutions, universities, and industry.³

Wales

Life Sciences Hub Wales plays a central role in supporting innovation and sector growth. Its industry offer provides support on funding, business case development, project management and connections with appropriate innovation partners across health, social care and industry. This helps companies engage with the Welsh health and social care innovation ecosystem and supports the movement of promising products and services towards adoption.⁴

Health and Social Care Innovation Wales, supported by Life Sciences Hub Wales and partners, is intended to make it easier for NHS and social care teams to access guidance, tools and connections to drive innovation. Alongside this, the Innovation Directory Wales provides a national resource to help organisations identify Life Sciences companies, health organisations and innovation support services across Wales.⁵

Wales is also receiving targeted regulatory and skills support. In July 2025, RESILIENCE Wales brought together industry, education and Welsh Government partners to highlight talent development opportunities across the Life Sciences pipeline, including medicines manufacturing skills.^{6,7} In May 2026, the MHRA announced a programme of events and greater engagement with Welsh industry, researchers, NHS partners and government, focused on strengthening regulatory expertise in areas such as MedTech, AI-powered diagnostics, regenerative medicine, cell therapy and precision medicine.⁸

Northern Ireland

In October 2025, the Department for the Economy launched its three-year Skills Action Plan, expanding programmes such as Skill Up – which delivers free accredited courses in priority sectors including health sciences through Further Education colleges, Queen's University Belfast, and Ulster University – and Step Up, which targets economically inactive groups through strands including College Connect+, Disability Access Route to Education and Employment, and the Women Returners Access Programme.

Also in October 2025, the NI City and Growth Deals programme published a Life and Health Sciences Skills Assessment identifying critical workforce gaps and setting out a roadmap for targeted intervention. City and Growth Deal capital investment is supporting the Future Medicines Institute at Queen's University Belfast, which offers hands-on training in precision medicine, novel therapeutics, and diagnostics alongside leading pharmaceutical and diagnostics companies. The City and Growth Deal – amounting to £1.2 billion over 15 years, with around a quarter allocated to Life Sciences – also supports major programmes such as iREACH, Momentum One Zero, the Centre for Digital

Healthcare Technology, the Cognitive Analytics Research and Innovation Centre, and the Centre for Food and Drug Discovery, which are expected to enhance the region's attractiveness as a testbed for new technologies.⁹

Skills for Growth: West Midlands MedTech Skills Initiative

The West Midlands is using its regional Life Sciences and MedTech strengths to develop more responsive, employer-led skills provision. Working with Skills England, Pearson, education providers and industry partners, the West Midlands Combined Authority has helped co-design new Higher Technical Qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 to support progression into MedTech roles and respond to growing demand for technical, regulatory and digital skills. The courses have been approved by Skills England and welcomed by Skills Minister Baroness Jacqui Smith, recognising the West Midlands as a regional testbed for scaling skills innovation.

This approach reflects the wider ambition of the Life Sciences Jobs Plan: to build clearer routes into high-value careers, strengthen the domestic skills pipeline, and ensure provision keeps pace with emerging technologies. Labour market evidence points to significant demand for additional MedTech roles by 2035, driven by growth in AI-enabled healthcare, diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Meeting this demand will require scalable, job-focused training that is shaped by employers and aligned with local economic strengths.

The West Midlands provides a strong regional platform for this work. The area is home to a substantial MedTech business base and a wider health innovation ecosystem, supported by collaboration between government, industry, the NHS and education. Through the Health and MedTech Skills Forum, co-led by WMCA and Medilink Midlands, partners are working together to identify workforce needs, promote opportunities and support adoption of new skills provision.

Delivery is being supported through the WMCA-backed Future Talent Laboratory. BMet College will deliver the new Level 4 and 5 provision from September, alongside engagement with NHS HR leaders to strengthen early career pathways and showcase practical laboratory skills development.

The new MedTech HTQs will equip learners with practical, industry-relevant skills in areas such as digital health systems, regulation and product testing. They demonstrate a scalable model for employer-led technical education linking curriculum design directly to market demand. As delivery expands, this approach will help increase the supply of job-ready talent, reduce skills gaps, and accelerate innovation in the MedTech sector.

Liverpool City Region: Building a Life Sciences Talent Pipeline

Liverpool City Region is developing a comprehensive approach to Life Sciences workforce development, aligned to the growth of its Health and Life Sciences cluster and priority sub-sectors including advanced biomanufacturing, precision therapeutics and health technologies.

Through the Health & Life Sciences Cluster Board, the region is linking employer demand, specialist education and devolved skills provision to ensure the workforce system supports both current business needs and future investment opportunities. This includes close engagement with industry partners across pharma, biotechnology and health technology, alongside collaboration with local health innovation partners to align skills with innovation and adoption pathways.

The region combines world-leading Life Sciences assets, including the University of Liverpool, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Knowledge Quarter Liverpool and Sci-Tech Daresbury, with targeted skills programmes designed to help employers recruit and develop talent at every level. Through the Liverpool City Region Life Sciences Innovation Zone, employers can access dedicated recruitment support, tailored training packages, Skills Bootcamps, apprenticeships and Adult Skills Fund provision aligned to business needs. The region also offers support for entry-level, technical and graduate recruitment, helping employers build sustainable local talent pipelines.

A key part of this approach is early engagement with young people. The Life Sciences University Technical College (UTC) provides a specialist pathway that combines academic study with technical and employer-informed learning, helping students develop skills relevant to careers in laboratory science, biotechnology, healthcare, digital health and advanced manufacturing. Working closely with industry partners, the UTC provides learners with exposure to real-world applications of Life Sciences and supports progression into apprenticeships, higher education and employment.

This joined-up model reflects Liverpool City Region's ambition to strengthen its position as a globally significant Life Sciences cluster. By connecting education providers, universities, employers and devolved skills funding, the region is creating clear pathways into high-value careers while ensuring businesses can access the workforce needed to support future growth and investment.

Greater Manchester: Developing Advanced Skills for a Growing Life Sciences Cluster

Greater Manchester is home to one of the UK's largest and fastest-growing Life Sciences clusters, with strengths spanning genomics, diagnostics, advanced therapies, clinical trials, health technologies and manufacturing. The city region combines internationally recognised research assets, a large and diverse healthcare system, and devolved skills powers to support employers' workforce needs and create pathways into high-value careers.

A key part of this offer is the Centre for Clinical and Biomedical Sciences at The Manchester College, which provides specialist training in laboratory science, biomedical science and healthcare disciplines. Developed in partnership with employers and universities, the Centre gives learners access to industry-standard facilities and practical experience, helping prepare them for careers across research, diagnostics, healthcare and Life Sciences manufacturing.

At a regional level, Greater Manchester has identified Life Sciences, health innovation and advanced manufacturing as priority growth sectors. Through devolved adult skills funding, Skills Bootcamps, apprenticeships and close collaboration between employers, universities and training providers, the city region is able to respond to emerging workforce needs and support businesses investing in the area. Employers can work directly with skills providers to shape training provision, helping ensure local people are equipped with the technical and transferable skills required by a rapidly evolving sector.

This collaborative approach is supported by Greater Manchester's wider innovation ecosystem, including its universities, NHS partners and industry networks. Together, these organisations are helping to create a strong pipeline of talent, from technical and laboratory roles through to graduate and specialist occupations, ensuring the workforce needed to support future growth, innovation and investment in Life Sciences.

Connecting Life Sciences Talent

Taken together, Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington offer complementary strengths across infection, vaccines, biomanufacturing, genomics, diagnostics, health data and clinical research. The emerging Northern Arc provides an opportunity to connect these assets through improved transport, closer collaboration between employers and skills providers, and a more integrated labour market.

A stronger Liverpool–Manchester connection could widen access to training and employment, help employers draw from a larger and more diverse talent pool, and make it easier to coordinate specialist provision across universities, colleges and industry. Stronger links with the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor could extend this further, connecting two of the UK's leading science economies and supporting collaboration on shared skills needs, R&D and investment.

Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor: Connecting Talent Across a World-Leading Innovation Ecosystem

The Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor brings together one of the world's strongest concentrations of Life Sciences research, innovative businesses and skilled people. Anchored by Oxford and Cambridge, but extending through Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, the Corridor supports activity spanning biopharmaceuticals, MedTech, genomics, advanced therapies, diagnostics and research-intensive manufacturing.

Its skills offer is underpinned by ten universities, further education providers, specialist research institutes and major innovation campuses. These institutions support pathways from technical and laboratory occupations through to postgraduate research, while the wider concentration of digital, AI, engineering and advanced manufacturing expertise enables people and skills to move between sectors. This is increasingly important as Life Sciences employers seek workers who can combine biological knowledge with capabilities in areas such as data science, automation, regulation and commercialisation.

Employers, education providers and government are working together to strengthen coordination across the skills system. Activity is focused on identifying future skills needs and improving how these are monitored over time. This will support a more responsive system, helping to shape new courses, qualifications and career pathways across the region.

By connecting its education and research strengths with major employment locations and improved transport infrastructure, the Corridor aims to widen access to Life Sciences careers beyond its established centres. This pan-regional approach can help employers access a deeper and more diverse workforce, while enabling more communities to benefit from the high-value jobs created by continued investment and sector growth.

London: An Employer-Led Talent System for Life Sciences

In October 2025, the Mayor of London and London Councils launched the Inclusive Talent Strategy, aiming to build a more integrated, employer-led skills and employment system. A central pillar is the establishment of a Life Science Talent Board, a strategic convening of employers and industry stakeholders that will shape public investment in training to align with real workforce needs. The permanent Board will launch in September 2026 and remain in place until 2029. An interim Board, comprising Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, MedCity, BIA, King's Health Partners, SRG, and Cogent Skills, has been working since November 2025 to scope targeted interventions across three priorities: raising Life Sciences career awareness for young people, unlocking access to talent for SMEs through funded placement models and Skills Bootcamps, and mapping entrepreneurship and business skills provision across London's universities.

Delivery will be coordinated through a pan-London Life Science Hub, operated by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and five consortium partners spanning London's innovation districts, including Paddington Life Sciences, Knowledge Quarter, SC1 London, White City, and Barts Life Sciences. The Hub will provide a matchmaking function linking employers with training providers and sub-regional hubs, supported by £360,000 per year in Mayoral grant funding until 2029. Four Sub-Regional Hubs will deliver locally, supported by £4.05 million in Adult Skills Fund investment over three years across priority sectors.

References

¹ [Skills](#), IBioIC

² [Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community](#)

³ [Local Innovation Partnerships Fund](#), Glasgow City Region, 2025

⁴ [How we support industry](#), Life Sciences Hub Wales

⁵ [Innovation Directory Wales - Powered by Life Sciences Hub Wales](#), Business Wales, 2024

⁶ [Launch of RESILIENCE: Wales – A Bold Step Towards a Thriving Life Sciences Future](#), Life Sciences Hub Wales, 2025

⁷ [RESILIENCE Wales: Advancing Skills in Medicines Manufacturing](#), RESILIENCE Skills, 2025

⁸ [MHRA to support local Life Sciences sector in Wales](#), MHRA, 2026

⁹ [Life and Health Sciences - Sectoral Action Plan](#), Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland), 2024