

Medical Laboratory Assistant

SCAN ME



NHSWI website

X
Facebook
Instagram
Web

@NHSWI
facebook.com/NHSWesternIsles
NHS Western Isles
wihb.scot.nhs.uk

Western Isles Health Board
The best at what we do



Job Advert



Medical Laboratory Assistant

**Band 3 £28,011 - £30,230 per annum
Plus Distant Islands Allowance of £1,406
37 hours per week
Fixed term
12 month post Maternity cover**

An opportunity has arisen for a Medical Laboratory Assistant to join the team that provide the diagnostic laboratory service for the NHS Western Isles Hospitals and GPs.

We are seeking an enthusiastic individual to carry out duties of a technical and administrative nature under the supervision of qualified staff. An interest in laboratory work would be an advantage.

Laboratory duties include specimen reception, data entry, and assisting in specimen processing. Other duties include setting up and maintaining laboratory and point of care testing equipment, specimen discard/autoclaving, stock control, cleaning and disinfection of laboratory equipment. Other appropriate duties may be required to help ensure the efficient running of the department.

For further information regarding this post, please contact Joel Briggs via email at joel.briggs1@nhs.scot.

The successful applicant will be required to register with the PVG Scheme (Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme). This post is not eligible for relocation expenses.

All NHS Western Isles vacancies appear on the NHS Scotland website: apply.jobs.scot.nhs.uk, along with a job description.

Tha beàrnan-obrach NHS Eilean Siar uile gu léir a' nochdadh air làrach-lìn NHS na h-Alba <https://apply.jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>, còmhla ri dealbh-obrach.

If you have any further queries, please contact Tel: 01851 762027.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Job Title: | Medical Laboratory Assistant |
| Responsible to (insert job title): | Laboratory Manager |
| Department(s): | Laboratory |
| Directorate: | |
| Operating Division: | |
| Job Reference: | |
| No of Job Holders: | 5 |
| Last Update (insert date): | 14.11.2025 |

2. JOB PURPOSE

To support and assist scientific staff in the delivery of the laboratory service including receiving, booking in and preparing samples for analysis and undertaking specific laboratory analysis and related tasks. To deal with reception and telephone enquiries. May be required to mentor or support staff in training.

N.B In the event of NHS Scotland being placed on an 'Emergency Footing' and or NHSWI declaring a 'Major Incident', or similar critical service demand, the role will be subject to change based on the exigencies of the service and post holder competence.

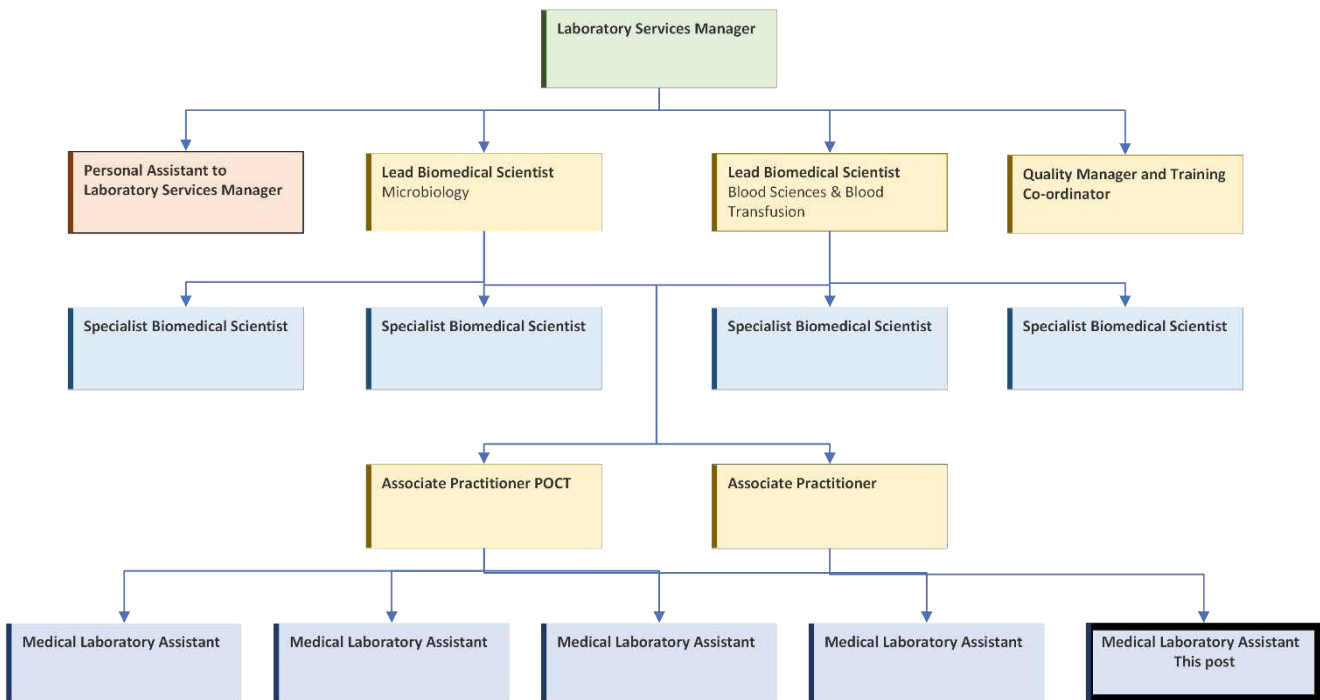
3. DIMENSIONS

The post holder will provide support in all laboratory sections including point of care testing. Tasks will primarily be performed in the laboratory however there will also be a requirement to work in other areas of the Western Isles Hospital that utilise point of care equipment i.e. the Emergency Department.

The post holder will work within a small team of Medical Laboratory Assistants and Biomedical Scientists.

The post holder is the first point of contact for laboratory enquiries and will involve dealing with medical and nursing staff from primary and secondary care, laboratory staff from other organisations and members of the public.

4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

The laboratory service for NHS Western Isles is based at the Western Isles Hospital, consisting of Blood Sciences, Blood Transfusion and Microbiology. In addition to this the laboratory maintains three mini-labs, one each at the Western Isles Hospital, Uist and Barra Hospital and St Brendan's Hospital. The mini-labs provide a suite of urgent tests for use outside the laboratory's core hours.

The laboratory provides services to primary and secondary care sites throughout the Western Isles, processing in excess of 500,000 tests per year. In addition to samples analysed on site, the laboratory sends samples to sites across Scotland and the wider UK for specialist testing to provide a full diagnostic service.

The laboratory operates a 7 day service, 365 days a year, although the out of hours service is limited. The post holder may be required to work outside of core hours, including weekends and public holidays.

6. KEY RESULT AREAS

The post holder is required to take responsibility for their own work, under the supervision of Lead Biomedical Scientists and the Associate Practitioner who manage the work for the sections. The post holder will undertake duties in all areas of the laboratory and may be required to work at other areas including outlying sites.

Work patterns may vary and to meet the requirements of the service, the post holder may be required to work at times between 8am and 8pm and at weekends.

Adhere to policies and procedures relevant to all areas of work in accordance with departmental, hospital and regulatory requirements, including:

All standard operating procedures

Quality management policies

Internal quality control

Health, safety and risk management procedures

Patient confidentiality policies and current data protection legislation

Receive, sort and label samples through manual and electronic testing requesting channels, paying close attention to the adequacy and accuracy of the patient details.

Enter patient and request information accurately on the laboratory information management (LIMS) computer system.

Prioritise urgent and emergency samples, register requests and ensure the rapid processing of these samples.

Check and prepare samples for analysis and load onto analysers, where appropriate.

Perform a wide range of basic laboratory tests.

Separate and store samples for specialist testing and clinical trials. Package and register send away tests.

Store, retrieve and dispose of samples in accordance with departmental protocols.

Perform agreed set-up, maintenance and quality control procedures on analysers under the supervision of a Biomedical scientist for own use and for other staff to operate.

Prepare and send out quality control material for point of care schemes.

Collate the returns for point of care and regional quality control schemes.

Undertake regular work answering queries on LIMS and resolve overdue test issues or refer to a Biomedical scientist.

Prepare stains, chemical solutions and buffers.

Maintain the cleanliness, disinfection and preparation for use (where appropriate) of analysers and automated equipment, as well as support equipment such as centrifuges, pipettes, balances and all benches as required.

Respond appropriately to alarms from the temperature monitoring systems.

Prepare and archive blood films for special interest and clinical trials.

Respond to telephone and personal enquires, including those for patient's results. Maintain patient confidentiality at all times. If unable to assist, direct enquires to the appropriate staff member.

Dispose of laboratory waste including sharps bins.

Liaise with the Lead Biomedical Scientists, Associate Practitioner, and the Safety Officer, as appropriate, in the reporting of all accidents and incidents.

Ensure the continuity of the service is maintained by monitoring stocks of reagents and consumables and reporting deficiencies to the section supervisor.

Rotate through all work areas in the laboratory to carry out a wide range of laboratory duties in support of the efficient working of the department and to maintain skills.

Participate in review and update of standard operating procedures.

Demonstrate technical procedures to less experienced Biomedical Scientists, trainee staff and student placements in support of the training programme as required by the section supervisor.

Maintain an up to date training manual and personal development portfolio.

Attend, and or complete all NHS Western Isles mandatory training requirements.

7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

Specialist analytical equipment including analysers for Microbiology, Haematology, Biochemistry and Point of Care systems including pre-analytical equipment and other automated modules. Maintenance, monitoring, disinfection and operation of balances, analysers, centrifuges, automatic pipettes, fridge and freezers.
PCs, printers, photocopiers

7b. SYSTEMS

All records created in the course of the business of NHS Western Isles are corporate records and are public records under the terms of the Public Records (Scotland) act 2011. This includes email messages and other electronic records. It is the post holder's responsibility to ensure that you keep appropriate records of their work for NHS Western Isles and manage these records in keeping with the NHS Western Isles records management policy and with any guidance produced by NHS Western Isles specific to their employment.

Networked laboratory computer systems i.e. Medipath, Point of care middlewares
Network test requesting software, patient administration systems i.e. SCI Store.
Independent software e.g. iPassport.
Email, hospital intranet and various word processing packages.

8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

The work performed by the laboratory is largely demand led. This means it is subject to fluctuations in hospital bed occupancy, outpatient clinic attendance, GP requesting patterns and transport cancelations. However there are regular sample drop offs throughout the day, providing peaks and troughs of activity.

Workload is allocated by either Biomedical Scientists or Associate Practitioners. The post holder is expected to work alone or as part of a team as circumstances dictate. The post holder can be expected to change section with little or no notice at the direction of the laboratory manager or deputy.

Close supervision of the post holder is not necessary, but performance is reviewed formally as part of the annual appraisal and PDP process.

Participate in personal development review.

9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

Operates within department procedure and policies and with reference to a Biomedical Scientist or Associate Practitioner/Supervisor.
Decides upon the priority and organisation of own work in coordination with other team members as allocated by a Biomedical Scientist or Associate Practitioner/Supervisor.
Assesses sample/patient identification integrity for analysis or rejection following established criteria.
Makes decisions on the acceptance/rejection of the quality of own work.
Uses own judgement to solve problems and escalate when appropriate within the laboratory e.g. lost sample, dealing with telephone enquiries, analyser troubleshooting.
Uses own initiative to deal with technical queries from trainee Biomedical scientists/MLA's newly qualified staff, and enquires from outside the laboratory.
Contributes own views to the evaluation of new instrumentation.

10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

Aspects of multitasking in a busy department where errors may affect patient care, compounded by periods of short staffing pressures.
Work patterns may be variable and out with normal hours of work.

Maintaining continuing professional development.
Maintaining a high level of concentration on accuracy and precision in the process of sample handling and testing over prolonged periods of time.
Team working.

11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The post holder is accountable to the Laboratory Services Manager through the line management structures.

Communicate with a wide range of scientific staff, including managers and supervisors, other MLAs within the team, medical and nursing staff, clerical, porters, estates staff and drivers. Respond to personal and telephone enquiries for results and technical queries and advise in accordance with standard operating procedures. Refer onward to other senior staff when appropriate.

Communicate with the Training Officer and Associate Practitioner regarding competence, personal development plans and the knowledge and skills framework.

Contribute to effective communication within department through attendance at department meetings, use of email, voice mail, workbooks and reading notices.

Contribute to department decision making and problem solving.

12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

Physical Effort:

Manual handling of analyser reagents, stock items of not more than 10kg.

Disposal of clinical waste containers.

Carry and store multiple racks of samples.

Standing for up to 3 hours at a time working at an analyser, bench or in the mini-lab.

Physical Skills:

Accurate hand-eye coordination in pipetting for analysis and key board skills.

Mental Demands

High degree of sustained concentration (2-3hours/session) involved in correct patient identification, labelling, data input and sample processing – the majority of the working day.

Contend with regular interruption to concentration from telephone enquiries and other staff.

Supporting the maintenance of service in the presence of possible adverse effects, including equipment failure, short staffing.

Required to multi-task in the prioritisation work load.

Continuous awareness of the risks involved in the handling of specimens and maintaining safe laboratory practice.

Emotional Demands

Dealing with patients in a sensitive and professional manner who may occasionally be distressed or in some discomfort on a weekly basis.

Working under pressure to ensure all clinical specimens are correctly examined within established turnaround times in the knowledge that incorrect and delayed results directly affect the patient and their management.

Working Conditions

Daily exposure of potentially infectious blood samples and body fluids.

Daily exposure to a variety of hazardous chemicals with poison, corrosive and flammable risks.

13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

Supervised vocational training for a minimum of one year and documented competence in a wide range of tasks required in this post.

Good understanding of Biomedical Science function and service provision

Training in infection control, health and safety, manual handling, patient confidentiality policies.

Knowledge and experience of local health and safety procedures.

Ability to convey a professional image to colleagues and patients.

Good computer skills and manual dexterity.

Knowledge and experience of data input, word processing and spreadsheets.

Good level of literacy and numeracy skills.

Clear, legible handwriting.

Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team

Good communication and interpersonal skills

14. STANDARD ELEMENTS

STANDARD ELEMENTS

Confidentiality

Comply with all approved NHSWI Policies and Procedures.

Comply with NHSWI Communication Strategy and Media Strategy.

This involves taking the necessary precautions when transmitting information only disclosing it to those who have the right and need to know it.

All personal health information is held under strict legal and ethical obligations of confidentiality.

NHS staff must follow guidance (NHS Code of Practice on Protecting Patient Confidentiality) before disclosing any patient information. All staff must respect confidentiality of all matters that they may learn relating to their employment, other members of staff, patients and their families.

Health and Safety:

Assist in maintaining own and others' health, safety and security.

This involves:

- a) Complying with Board health and safety policies, procedures and participating in mandatory training.
- b) Maintaining a safe working environment and reporting any issues of concern as appropriate.

NHS Western Isles attaches the greatest importance to the health and safety of its employees. It is the Board policy to do all that is reasonable to prevent personal injury and hazard to health by protecting staff and others including the public from foreseeable hazards compatible with the provision of proper services to patients. The Board expects its entire staff to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. More detailed information is given in departmental safety policies where appropriate.

Ensure own actions support equality, diversity and rights.

This involves:

- a) Acting in ways consistent with the Board's policies and procedures.
- b) Treating those you come into contact with equitably and with respect.
- c) Recognising the need for aids or adaptations.

15. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Date:

Head of Department Signature:

Date: 14.11.2025

NHS WESTERN ISLES - PERSON SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE

Job Title: Medical Laboratory Assistant

Department: Laboratory

Location: Western Isles Hospital

| FACTOR | ESSENTIAL | DESIRABLE |
|--|---|---|
| EXPERIENCE | <p>Awareness of laboratory health and safety procedures, including sample handling/disposal etc.</p> <p>Previous laboratory experience</p> | <p>Can perform analyser set-up, maintenance, quality control and sample processing</p> <p>Experience in training staff</p> <p>Experience in chemical/ reagent preparation</p> |
| QUALIFICATIONS TRAINING RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS | <p>3 Highers at Grade C or above, which should include either Chemistry or Biology together with Maths, <u>or</u></p> <p>IBMS Certificate of Achievement part 1or</p> <p>Education to SVQ 3 / HNC in Biomedical Science or related science subject or equivalent experience and documented competence</p> | <p>Evidence of personal development portfolio</p> |
| KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS | <p>Good knowledge of routine laboratory theory and practice</p> <p>Knowledge of laboratory investigations</p> | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <p>DISPOSITION</p> | <p>An ability to convey a professional image to colleagues and patients</p> <p>Display appropriate communication skills when dealing with telephone enquiries, staff, public and patients</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with all grades of staff</p> <p>Understanding of confidentiality in relation to patients and staff</p> <p>Demonstrate a high level of attention to detail in order to maintain quality standards</p> <p>An effective team worker</p> <p>Evidence of enthusiasm, self-motivation and use of initiative</p> <p>A positive and proactive attitude towards change and problem solving</p> <p>Ability to prioritise work</p> <p>Ability to organise own time and work in a demanding environment</p> <p>Prepared to work flexibly</p> | <p>Sensitivity in dealing with people</p> <p>Keen to develop own personal skills and experience</p> |
|---------------------------|---|---|

| | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| OTHER | <p>Although the work is generally not physically demanding, applicants require to be able to stand for prolonged periods, carry out at speed tasks involving manual dexterity.</p> <p>Carry biological materials safety within a busy and varied working environment, frequently change position and orientation and cope with manual handing i.e. lifting</p> <p>Candidates will therefore be required to possess sufficient mobility so that he/she can carry out the duties of the post without compromise to the service or to the safety of colleagues</p> <p>To be able to work flexibly in response to operational needs</p> | |
|--------------|---|--|

A Place to Live

The quality of life in the Western Isles, particularly for those with families, is outstanding: a safe space to bring up children, stress-free commutes with jaw-dropping views, and the opportunity to stroll along our pristine beaches or explore our dramatic scenery on your days off.

Community spirit is at the heart of the Western Isles. It is close-knit and welcoming, residents are proud of the place where they live and are keen to support young and old. The islands have a strong cultural identity stemming from their distinctive history.

Although the islands are remote, you can still keep connected with the wider world. There are frequent transport links to the mainland via ferries and three island airports – Barra, Benbecula, and Stornoway. The Air Discount Scheme (cheaper flights for islanders) and Road Equivalent Tariff (subsidised ferry fares) ensure transport is affordable. High-speed internet is widely available and allows islanders to stay connected globally.

Local Primary and Secondary Schools provide high quality education with the opportunity to learn through the Gaelic language. There is a network of excellent sport and leisure facilities in the Western Isles with annual cultural festivals and venues with live entertainment.

Key worker housing can be applied for through Hebridean Housing Partnership.

Useful Information

cne-siar.gov.uk Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council - for more information on Schools, leisure and culture)
visitouterhebrides.co.uk (for more information on our islands and what to see and do)

A Place to Work

NHS Western Isles employs over 1000 staff over a number of sites, including:

- Ospadal nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Hospital), Stornoway
- Ospadal Uibhist agus Bharraigh (Uist and Barra Hospital), Benbecula
- St Brendan's Hospital, Barra
- A number of GP and Dental Practices across the island chain
- A variety of community-based health services

Being part of a smaller team with a flat management structure provides the opportunity to widen your experience and be involved in a range of planning and decision-making that you might not otherwise experience in a larger setting. Our patients are our community, and there is opportunity to contribute to multi-disciplinary and holistic care to patients and families across healthcare settings.

Support and development are central to NHS Western Isles' ethos, and this involves working in partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands, NHS Education for Scotland, and other higher education institutions. Our Professional Practice and Learning team will support and advise you on your learning journey. Many opportunities can now be accessed remotely through online learning. Regular clinical training is available and scenario-based learning is available in our recently-installed sim lab.

The Western Isles has a range of employment opportunities in the public and private sector for those that are relocating as a family. Please contact us and we can direct you to vacancies that might be suitable.

All staff are valued equally and we welcome and encourage those from diverse backgrounds to come and work for us.



HOSPITAL

NHS WESTERN ISLES

BENEFITS

Pay

The NHS pay system is known as Agenda for Change (AfC) which applies to all staff excluding medical, dental and executive level managers.

The benefits include a standard working week of 37 hours, with pay enhancements to reward weekends, nights and overtime working. This ranges from time plus 88% to time plus 30% depending on your pay band and shifts you work.

Distant Islands Allowance is paid to all staff who live in the Western Isles. This is currently £1,349 per year.

Annual Leave

Annual leave entitlement is 27 working days, rising to 29 working days after 5 years' service and 33 days after 10 years' service. In addition to this, you are entitled to 8 statutory public holidays every year.

Work-life balance

We understand that balancing work and home commitments can sometimes be difficult.

Our policies offer:

- Flexible working including home working
- Paid parental leave
- Paid carer leave
- Paid bereavement leave
- Occupational sick pay scheme

Wellbeing

We recognise that your mental and physical wellbeing is important and we aim to support you in the workplace.

We have a 24-hour confidential helpline to support you and your family through any of life's issues or problems. This includes counselling, family issues, bereavement, financial wellbeing, relationship advice, legal information and more.

NHS Pension Scheme

All new employees will automatically be enrolled in the NHS Pension Scheme, or if you are an existing member your membership will continue.

Key features

- Benefits accrued on a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) basis.
- Normal pension age the same as your State Pension Age.
- Pension accrual rate of 1/54th of pensionable earnings each year.
- Valuable death benefits for your dependents.
- Option to take part of your pension and continue working.

Further information on the benefits of the scheme, can be found at sppa.gov.uk.

Travel & Transport

We participate in the Cycle to Work scheme, enabling you the opportunity to buy a bike tax-free.

Those who need to travel a lot for work will be eligible for a leased car.

Right to Work in the United Kingdom

We will support those that are eligible for a certificate of sponsorship to apply for a work visa. Candidates who require a Certificate of Sponsorship can access further information on the UK Border Agency's new points based system that now governs the way individuals from outside the EEA can work in the UK at bia.homeoffice.gov.uk.

