

LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY REPORT

# **The pressure points of the Golden Triangle**

## OPEN VACANCIES



Our latest Life Sciences Report on open vacancies focuses on the Golden Triangle of Cambridge, London and Oxford where 71% of all science vacancies currently sit. In 2021 to date we have seen over 2,200 vacancies live, representing already 85% of total vacancies seen in 2020. There is however a great disparity around the clusters of opportunities with 7% in Oxford, 43% in London and 49% of all vacancies sitting in Cambridge. There has been a mounting pressure for talent to fill vacancies across all three cities, yet the real pressure point sits within Cambridge; a small but vibrant city well known for its university and being a centre of excellence for Life Sciences and health-related research. In order to attempt to combat the deepening talent crisis, Cambridge University has launched its roadmap initiative, Connect: Health Tech, which aims to enable more entrepreneurs, businesses, researchers and investors to connect and address global challenges in Health Tech and the expertise across the cluster.

Whilst there are great initiatives and investments coming through, the whole community of Life Sciences as a UK ecosystem needs to establish better senior working communities that can drive “action” based outcomes around the resources already available. New initiatives are no doubt needed, particularly within Health Tech, a huge emerging area, yet still the apprenticeship schemes have a low level of uptake and many companies are still not being held accountable for their role in new skill development. As CEO of one of the leading UK Life Sciences staffing businesses, I have been contacted more in the last 6 months from by senior industry leaders in the UK and US challenging and asking for data around hiring and identifying talent. The issues here are complex. Be aware the talent that is available and looking for career moves are placed into archaic, protracted hiring processes lacking agility, feedback or care. They do not place the candidate at the heart of the experience and a constant battle of seeking candidates with a 100% skill fit is at best unrealistic and at worst, exposes a lack of investment in developing new employees that have the majority of the skills and require some development. We often get asked for “Unicorn” candidates, yet we know, they only appear in fairy tales. As an organisation if you are not investing in learning and development or early years development, why would you assume other firms do? It’s easy becoming frustrated by the lack of experienced talent, yet rather pointless if you make no contribution as a business yourself.

The combined expertise of world-class Universities of London, Cambridge and Oxford, as well as the big pharma presence of AstraZeneca in Cambridge and GSK in Stevenage, plus all the biotech’s in the region, make a truly world-class ecosystem that has had a hand in the discovery and development of many of today’s biggest selling medicines. It is an ecosystem that can go up against San Francisco and Boston in terms of the quality of science and innovation. This will come to a grinding halt if we don’t come together as an industry, invest and become more accountable for the skills that we will require to continue growing and understand that every company recognises it has a part to play in re-training, apprenticeship scheme adoption and new initiatives and investment in skills enhancement and talent development. Initiatives like Connect: Health Tech are critical, but also use the support already available and not utilised. If you are a leading executive within the Life Sciences ecosystem, make sure you are aware of the journey of a candidate through your organisation, I guarantee you, in many cases it is poor, convoluted and not a great experience.

For more details on how the RA apprenticeship scheme works and how it can support your growth, please do not hesitate to contact me on [Yvette.cleland@cpl.com](mailto:Yvette.cleland@cpl.com) for further guidance on how to play your part in making our industry more sustainable.

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## Overview

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As a trio of cities, Cambridge, Oxford and London are peerless in terms of technology and innovation. Outside of America, this Golden Triangle has the highest density of pharma and biotech companies.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of total scientific vacancies in the British life sciences industry come from the three regions surrounding them: Greater London, the South East and the East of England. Firms in these areas published 71% of scientific vacancies in 2020 — a level that has been maintained in the first six months of 2021.

The cities themselves account for 2,200 vacancies in 2021, which is already 85.2% of 2020's total after only six months. This sum constitutes 42% of total scientific vacancies in the three regions — and a third of all scientific hiring in the UK.

However, the share of vacancies among the three cities is not equal. It skews towards Cambridge (49%) and London (43.1%) — while Oxford accounts for only 7.9%. However, all three are showing strong growth in 2021, with hiring levels all about 84% of last year's totals.

A breakdown by sector shows consecutive quarter-on-quarter vacancy growth since Q3 2020 in CROs and biotech; hiring in pharmaceuticals, however, dropped by 15.4% in the Golden Triangle in Q2 2021. The most impressive growth is in CROs, with firms in this sector a few vacancies away from equalling the hiring level seen across the whole of 2020. The highest quarter-on-quarter growth (+9.3%) was experienced in the biotech sector.

Vacancies for non-scientific roles, meanwhile, up to and including June 2021 are at 81% of 2020's total levels, compared to 85.2% for scientific vacancies. However, non-scientific vacancies gained a little ground in the last quarters, finishing 6.5% up quarter-on-quarter compared to a drop of 3% in scientific vacancies. The share of scientific vacancies to others in life sciences in the Golden Triangle stands at nearly 62%.

### Yearly hiring volumes

Scientific vacancies, Golden Triangle (Cambridge, London & Oxford)

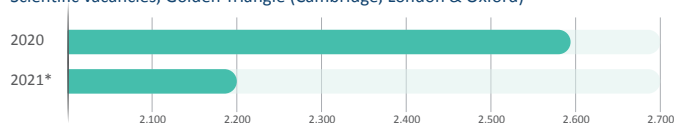


Fig. 01

### Vacancy volume ratios

Scientific vacancies, Golden Triangle, 2021\*

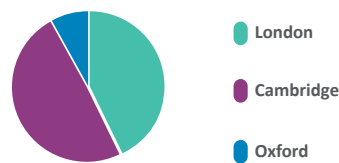


Fig. 02

### Quarterly Trends by Sector

Scientific vacancies, Golden Triangle (Cambridge, London & Oxford)

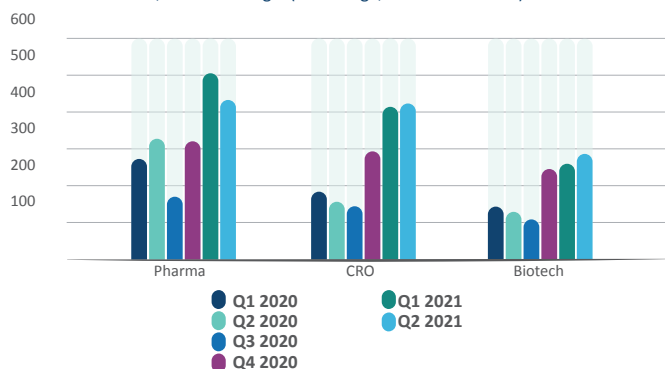


Fig. 03

### Monthly Hiring Trends

Scientific v Non-Scientific vacancies - Golden Triangle (Cambridge, London & Oxford)

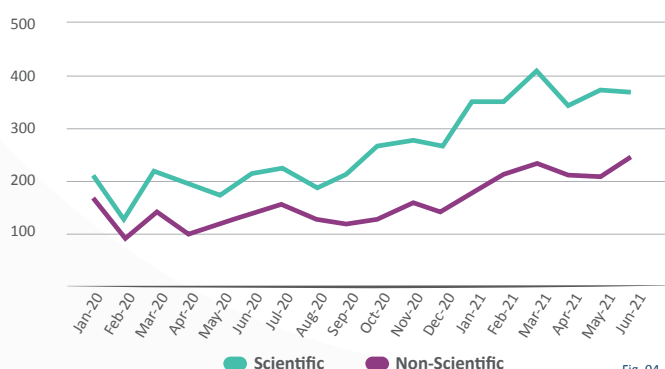


Fig. 04

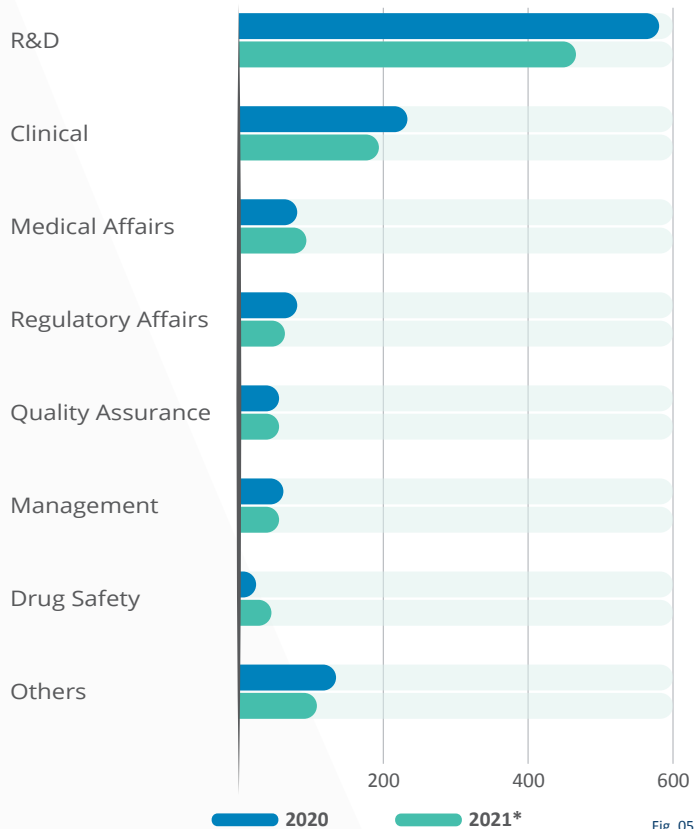
\* Jan-Jun 2021

## Cambridge

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### Specialisation

Scientific vacancies, Cambridge



\* Jan-Jun 2021

### Top 10 Companies

Scientific Vacancies - Cambridge & rEoE

Company	2020	2021*	% 21*/20
AstraZeneca	554	418	75.45%
PPD	148	228	154.05%
GSK	167	134	80.24%
Covance	101	99	98.02%
IQVIA	71	87	122.54%
Illumina	71	76	107.04%
Horizon	60	40	66.67%
Roche	75	36	48.00%
Charles River	33	28	84.85%
LGC	37	25	67.57%

\* Jan-Jun 2021

Fig. 06

Cambridge dominates the narrative regarding the strength of the Golden Triangle. In addition to its world-class university, it has formal industry networks, a good approach towards risk and successful entrepreneurs who want to get involved. It also benefits from high venture capital funding.

The university recently launched a roadmap, Connect: HealthTech, to support the future growth of the life sciences sector. It plans to bring together Cambridge's biomedical research and cutting-edge technology to develop new treatments and healthtech with real world applications.

The 1,077 professional scientific vacancies recorded so far in the city represent the highest number out of the Golden Triangle cities. Around 43% are for senior R&D roles. Although the most sought after specialisation, the 462 R&D vacancies published in 2021 represent a 3.3 percentage point drop in overall share — the biggest out of the most popular roles.

Demand for drug safety (+2.2 p.p.) and medical affairs specialists (+2 p.p.) has grown to 4.2% and 8.6% of the professional hiring market in the city. Recruitment for senior staff specialising in these fields has already exceeded 2020 levels, with hiring for drug safety (45 vacancies) and medical affairs experts (93 vacancies) up already 80% and 12.1% year-on-year. Vacancies for quality assurance specialists have also already overtaken last year's levels by 3.6%.

Cambridge is home to one of AstraZeneca's three global R&D centres. Over 3,600 of its employees are based in the city. The 418 vacancies published by AstraZeneca so far in 2021 means it remains the top firm in the city (and the rest of the EoE) for new scientific vacancies.

Global CRO PPD is in second place with 228 new vacancies in the region in 2021, already 54.1% more than its 2020 total. IQVIA (87 vacancies) and Illumina (76 vacancies) have also exceeded their 2020 hiring totals by 22.5% and 7%, respectively.

The UK is the leading country for clinical recruitment, accounting for 24% of all vacancies across Europe — up from 22% in 2019. That's an overall 98% increase in activity, which also constitutes the greatest rise in Europe.

In June, the UK government announced it would provide £64 million towards a plan to strengthen clinical research delivery. The Department for Health and Social Care hopes that it will, among others, make UK clinical research delivery easier through more rapid ethics reviews and faster approval processes.

Other than the UK, the largest growth in clinical vacancies has been in Russia, with 87% more vacancies in 2021 compared to 2019. As a result, it has entered the top ten countries by vacancy volume. Recent reports, however, suggest that the country's domestic drug makers are facing massive price rises for active ingredients.

With 75% of all drugs its pharmaceutical industry produces relying on foreign APIs, local manufacturers say that the production of some drugs is unprofitable. The smallest growth has been in Switzerland, with hiring levels for clinical specialists in 2021 up only 21% in relation to 2019.

When analysing the proportion of scientific vacancies that are clinical, Poland leads with 44% (although the share is down two percentage points compared to 2019). The country's capital, Warsaw, recently opened what is being dubbed as Central Europe's first Medical Valley.

The Warsaw Health Innovation Hub is a joint initiative between the Medical Research Agency, EIT Health and key global industry players including AstraZeneca, Microsoft, Polpharma and Roche. The hub will be focused on driving innovation in three key areas: pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and digital health solutions.

In contrast, in Russia, clinical vacancies have risen from 26% to 36% of all scientific vacancies. Spain is the other country with a significant increase proportionately, with clinical making up 37% of scientific vacancies compared to 30% two years earlier.

## Specialisation

Scientific vacancies, Oxford

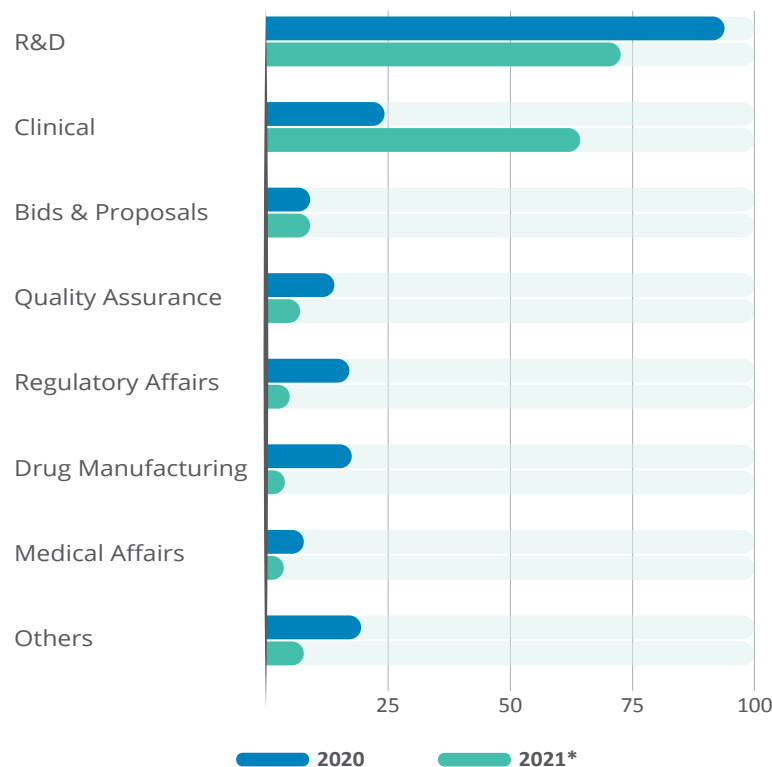


Fig. 07

## Top 10 Companies

Scientific Vacancies - Oxford & rSE

Company	2020	2021*	% 21*/20
<b>PRA Health Sciences</b>	95	269	<b>283.2</b>
<b>IQVIA</b>	165	169	<b>102.4</b>
<b>Lonza</b>	126	134	<b>106.3</b>
<b>Syneos Health</b>	283	99	<b>35</b>
<b>Adaptimmune</b>	65	97	<b>149.2</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson</b>	113	91	<b>80.5</b>
<b>Oxford Biomedica</b>	84	86	<b>102.4</b>
<b>Ergomed</b>	54	81	<b>150</b>
<b>Pfizer</b>	105	76	<b>72.4</b>
<b>Immunocore</b>	56	71	<b>126.8</b>

Fig. 08

\* Jan-Jun 2021



Nine out of the top 10 firms for clinical specialist vacancies are CROs. Syneos is in first place, its 750 vacancies so far this year, if averaged across the rest of 2021, constituting a 38.6% year-on-year rise. Earlier this year, it acquired Illingworth Research group, a clinical research home health company, to support increasing demand for in-home trials.

Parexel is on course for a 72.7% year-on-year increase, the largest out of the selected firms. The pharmaceuticals company is for sale and has reportedly drawn interest from about 10 parties. It is seeking a value of about \$9 billion, including debt. The company could also opt to proceed with an initial public offering instead.

The leading pharma company for hiring clinical specialists is AstraZeneca, with vacancy volumes up 27% compared to last year. The firm recently announced that it is lining up the finance boss from its new £28 billion subsidiary, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, to take over as CFO later this year. Aradhana Sarin will take over from Marc Dunoyer, who will be appointed as Alexion's new chief executive.

Recruitment at GSK represents the largest year-on-year surge, with professional hiring volumes up 160% compared to 2020. After a decline in profits, GSK's chief executive, Emma Walmsley, is under pressure to improve performance. She is vowing to keep research spending high as the drugmaker splits itself into a consumer health venture and a business bringing together pharmaceuticals, HIV and vaccines next summer.

Vacancies at Merck, meanwhile, are down 44%. In the US, the firm joined with IBM to form the core of a national hiring and training network created by OneTen, a coalition of major American employers that has promised to help hire and promote 1 million Black workers into higher-paying jobs over the next decade.

## Specialisation

Scientific vacancies, London

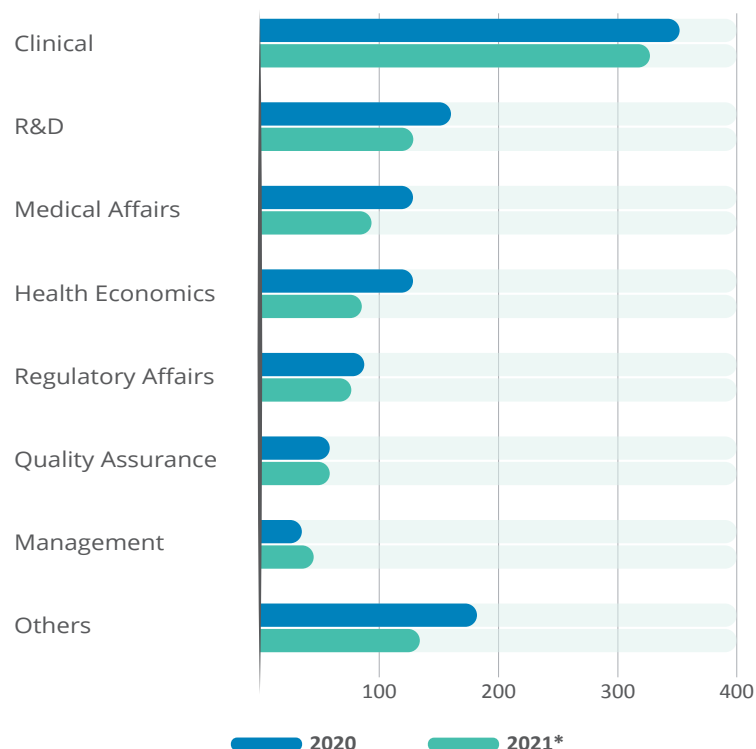


Fig. 07

## Top 10 Companies

Scientific Vacancies - London & rGreater London

Company	2020	2021*	% 21*/20
<b>Syneos Health</b>	120	161	134.2
<b>Parexel</b>	129	133	103.1
<b>GSK</b>	145	96	66.2
<b>IQVIA</b>	108	95	88
<b>ICON</b>	59	78	132.2
<b>Bristol-Myers Squibb</b>	98	65	66.3
<b>Gilead</b>	51	52	102
<b>Merck</b>	48	49	102.1
<b>Orchard Therapeutics</b>	51	45	88.2
<b>PRA Health Sciences</b>	121	44	36.4

Fig. 08

\* Jan-Jun 2021



**Cpl Life Sciences have an international presence, recruiting across Europe, supplying Pharmaceutical, Biotechnology and Clinical Services industries with the talent they require for success.**

Cpl UK is a group of specialist talent businesses which service the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Professional Services and Healthcare sectors across the UK.

Together we form the UK footprint for **Cpl Resources Plc** which is one of the largest staffing companies in Europe. As a group we've been powering businesses by providing transformational talent solutions for over 30 years and have been listed on the London Stock Exchange since 1999.

Our mission is to be the UK's best transformational talent partner across all our core markets and add meaningful value to lives of our clients, candidates and colleagues.

### **What we do:**

Our Service Capabilities across all European Countries include:

- Contingency permanent recruitment
- Contract recruitment – freelance and PAYE via Cpl UK
- Search and selection permanent recruitment
- Specialist 'project-based' interims via Cpl UK
- FSP outsourced teams across Europe
- European Salary Survey to determine the salary and benefits for each sector of the UK Life Science industry.

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