

# **Life Science jobs and skills: London context**

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LSIP refresh, 17 November 2025

# Life Science is a new growth priority for London

## London Growth Plan (2025)

- Creative Industries and Technologies
- Financial, Professional and Business Services and Technology
- Experience Economy (e.g., Hospitality)
- Frontier Innovation (e.g., **Life Sciences**, AI)
- International Education

## Local Skills Improvement Plan (2023)

- Construction / Built Environment
- Creative Industries
- Hospitality
- Health and Social care

## Cross-cutting themes:

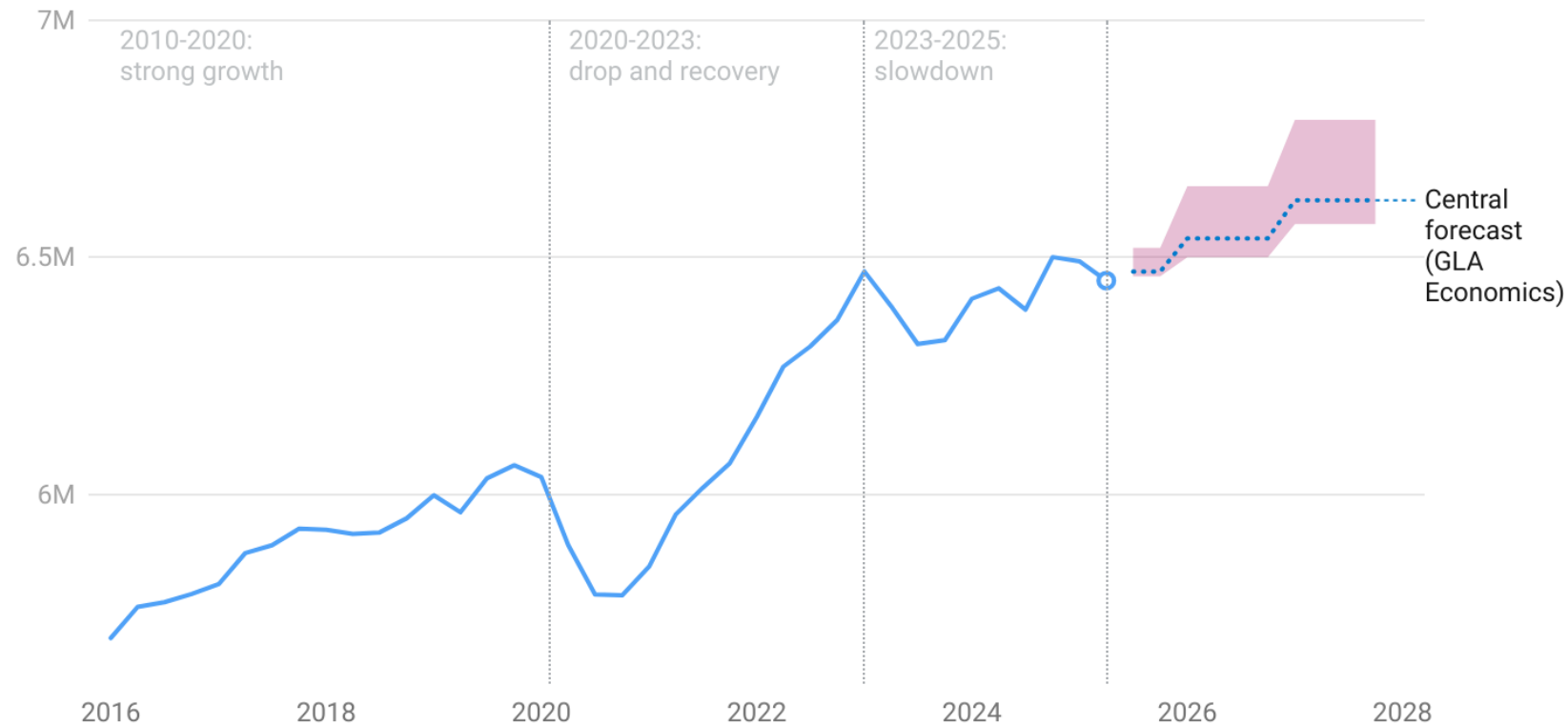
- Digital skills
- Green skills
- Transferable skills
- Labour Market Inclusion



# Jobs growth in London has stalled after a strong post-pandemic recovery but is forecast to pick up again

## Total jobs, actual and forecast

London, total workforce jobs, Q1 2010–Q2 2025 (actual), 2025–2027 (forecast)

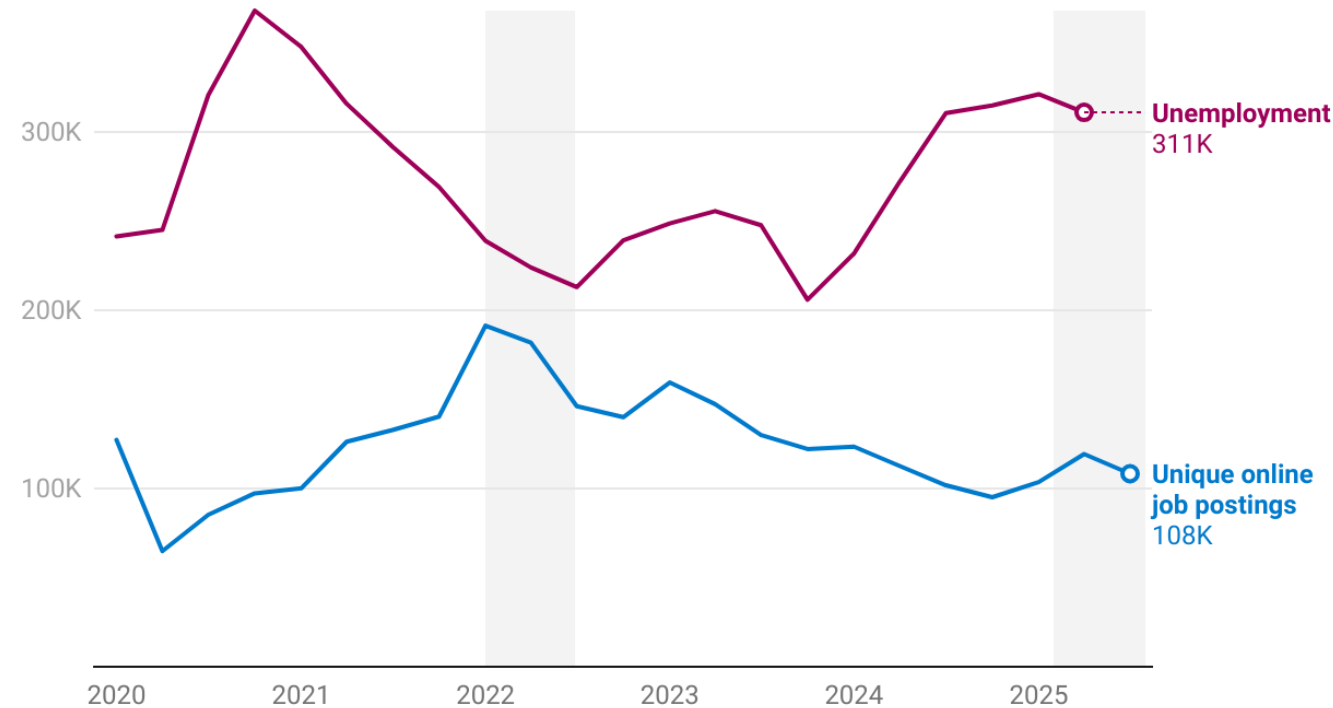


- Around 6.5m jobs today in London
- Up from 6.0m in Q1 2020; forecast to reach 6.6-6.7m in 2027
- Slower than expected growth in recent quarters

# Yet there are short-term pressures: fewer hires, more jobseekers

## Monthly online job postings and unemployment levels

London, Q1 2020–Q3 2025 (three-month averages)

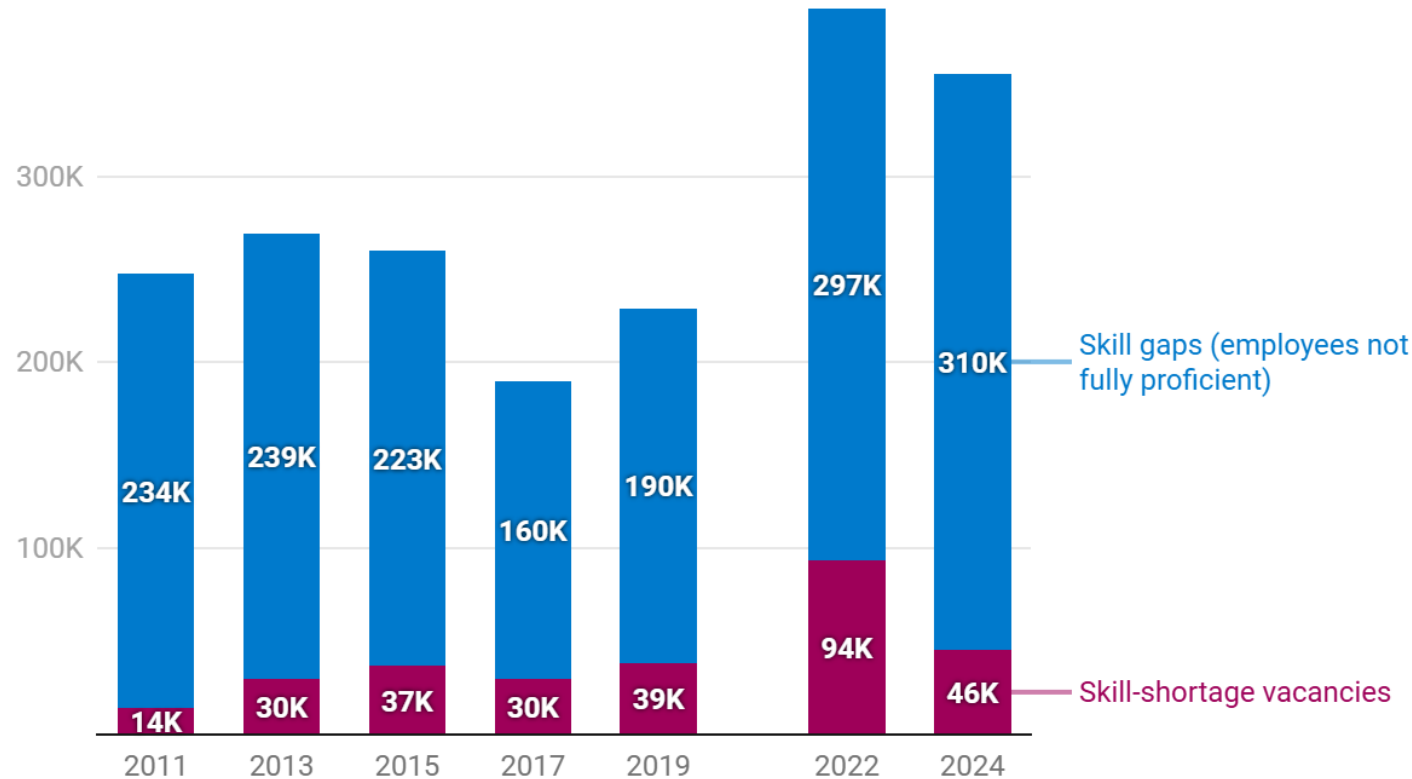


- Unemployment up to 311k people (~5%)
- Hiring demand weaker
- Pay growth remains strong – but 1-in-6 resident employees earn below the London Living Wage\*\*

# A significant number of London employers also continue to report skills-related challenges

## Total number of 'skills challenges'

London, 2011-2024



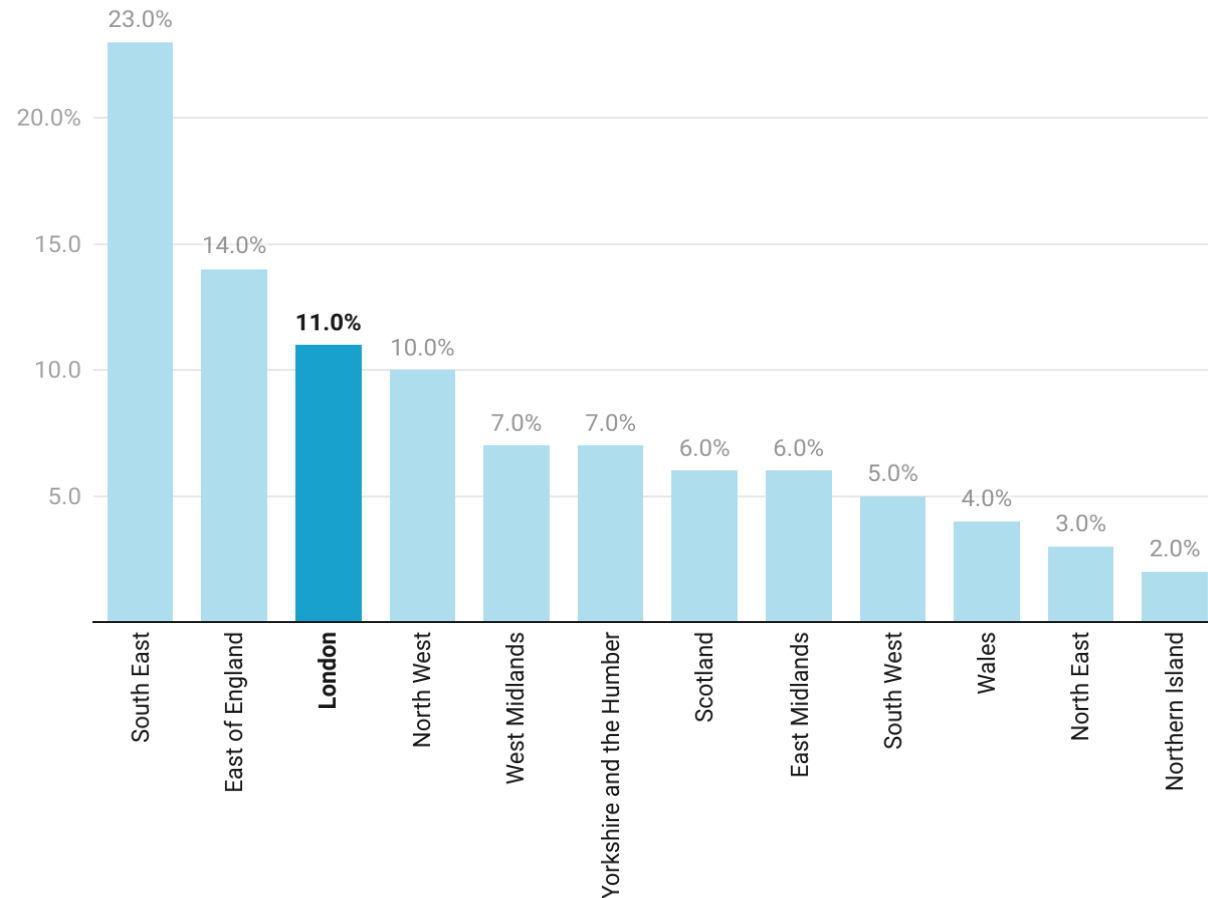
Overall skills challenges have eased since 2022

Yet in 2024:

- **46k job vacancies were hard to fill due to skills shortages (24% of vacancies)**
- **310k employees were not fully proficient (6%)**

# London is key part of the UK's *Life science* 'golden triangle'

## Share of Life science sector employment, 2021-22



- In 2021/22 the Office for Life Sciences estimated that UK employment in the sector was **c.300,000**.
- London accounted for **11%** of total employment in Life sciences (**35,000**).
- Small sector: ~ **<1%** of London's total employment.

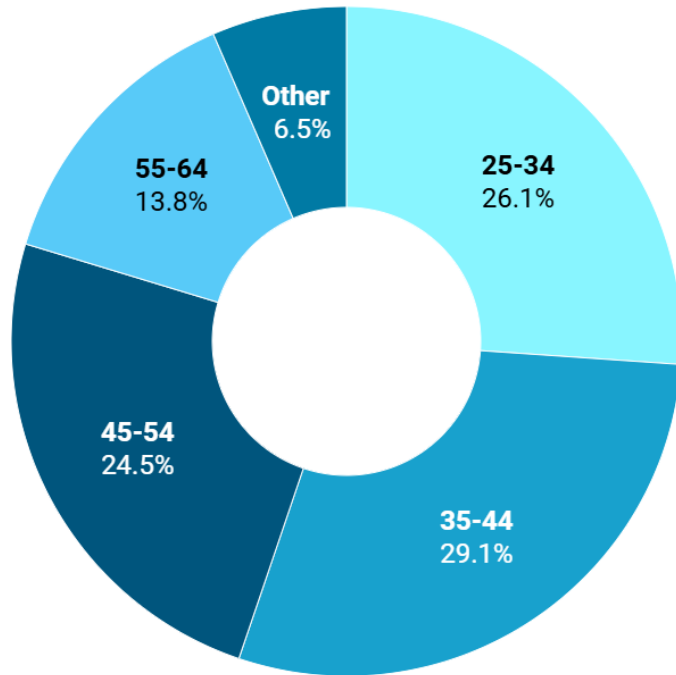
### Looking forward across the UK\*:

- **70,000+** new jobs over the next decade to unlock potential in BioPharma and Med-tech.
- **~75,000 additional employees** needed to **replace** those leaving the workforce.

# At the UK level, Life sciences is generally quite a young workforce but is less diverse in terms of sex and ethnicity

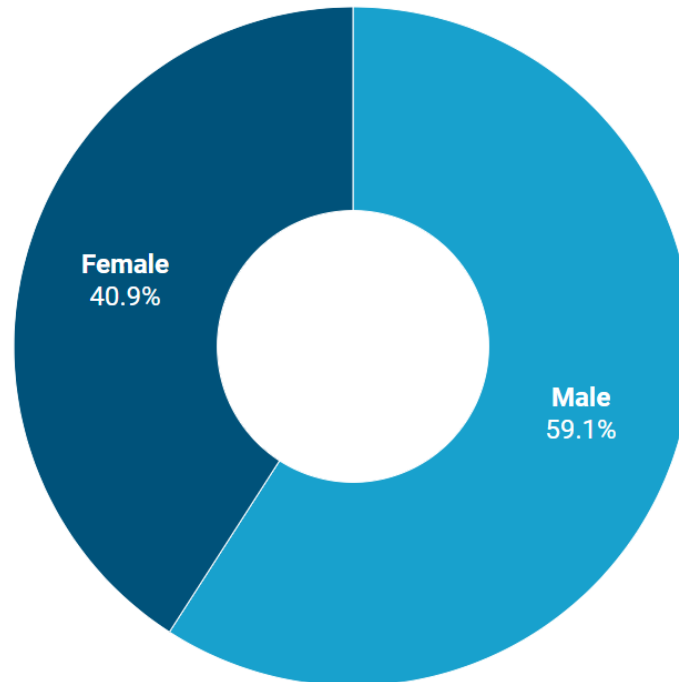
## Age, UK, 2023

25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 Other



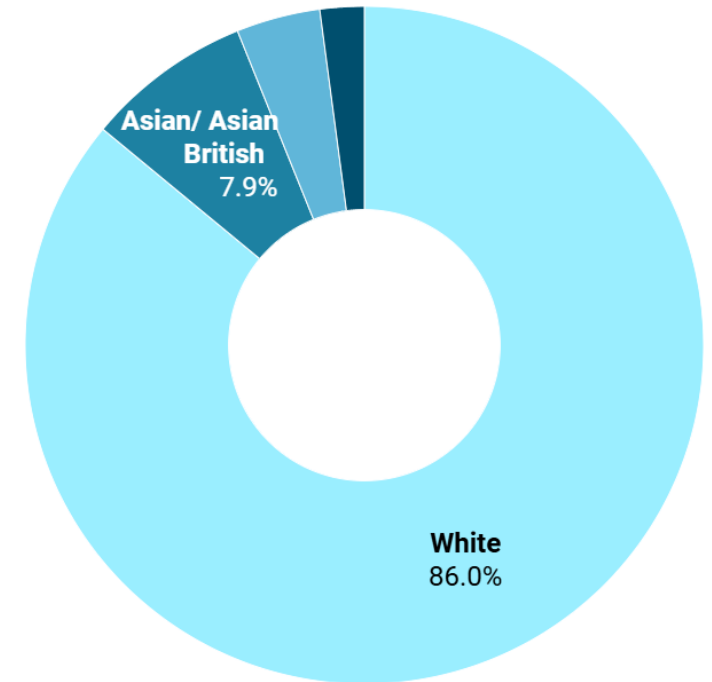
## Sex, UK, 2023

Male Female



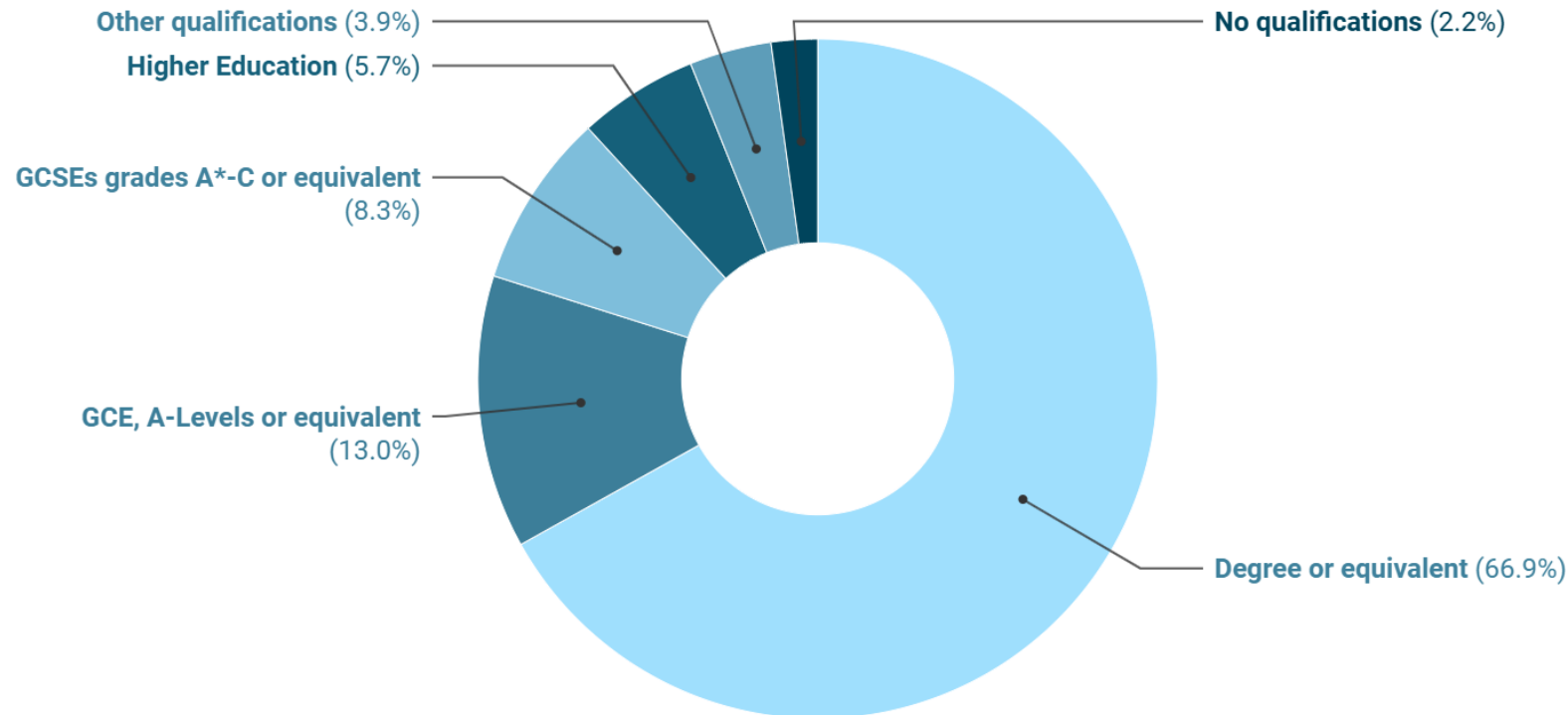
## Ethnicity, UK, 2023

White Asian/ Asian British  
Mixed/multiple Black/Black British



# Life sciences is a highly skilled sector with 2 out of 3 working in the sector holding at least a degree qualification

## Highest Qualification, UK, 2023

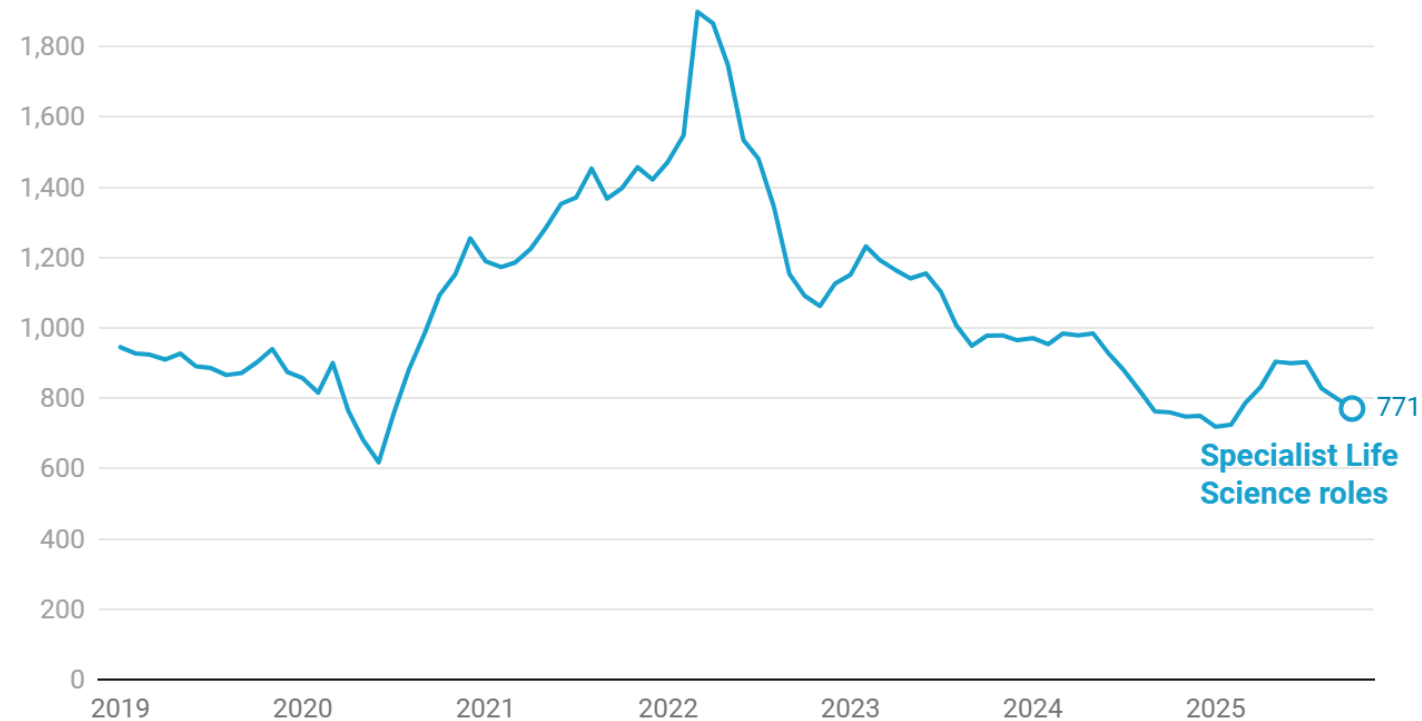


- This compares with ~ **40%** of UK Working Age Population.
- High skills / educational requirements can represent a barrier to entry.

# Similar to London as a whole, job postings for specialist Life Science roles had trended back down pre-pandemic levels

## Monthly online job postings for specialist Life Science roles

London, Jan 2019 - Oct 2025 (Three-month moving average)

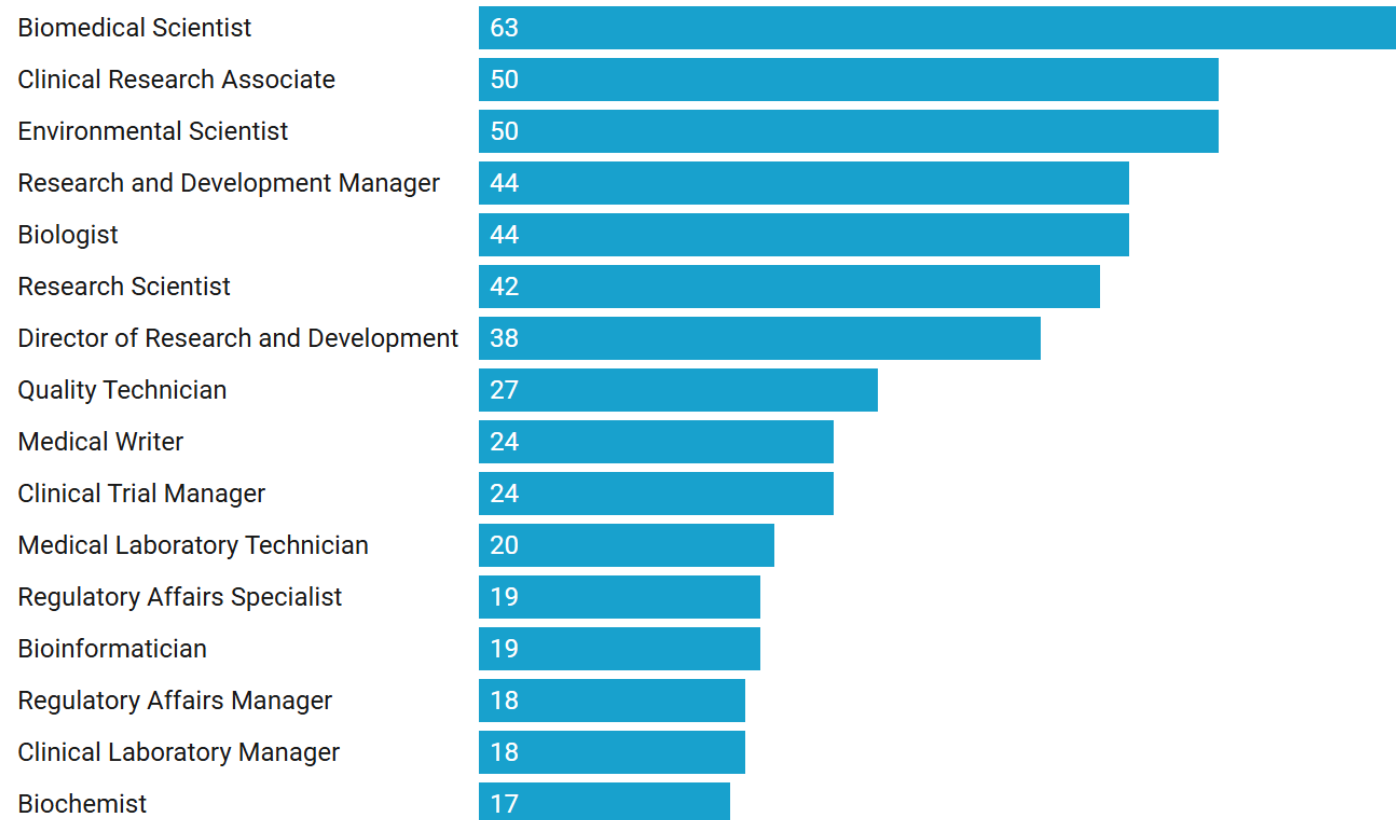


- Online job postings for Life Sciences down significantly from the highs of 2022.
- Remained broadly stable around pre-pandemic levels over recent months.
  - *~10,000 unique postings in the last 12 months.*

# Consistent with the workforce profile, high skill roles among the most in demand

## Top Life Science roles from online job postings

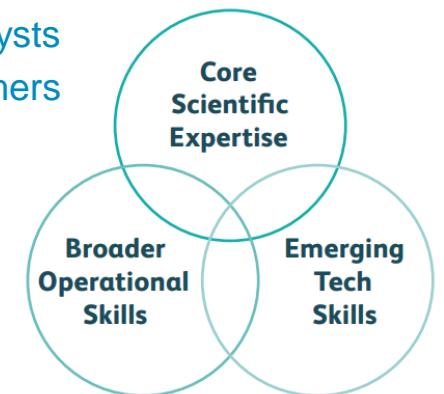
Unique monthly postings for selected Life sciences roles | London | November 2024-October 2025



- Majority of the most recruited for specialist life science roles in London require at least a degree.

- Life Science employers in London also have **broader occupational** needs:

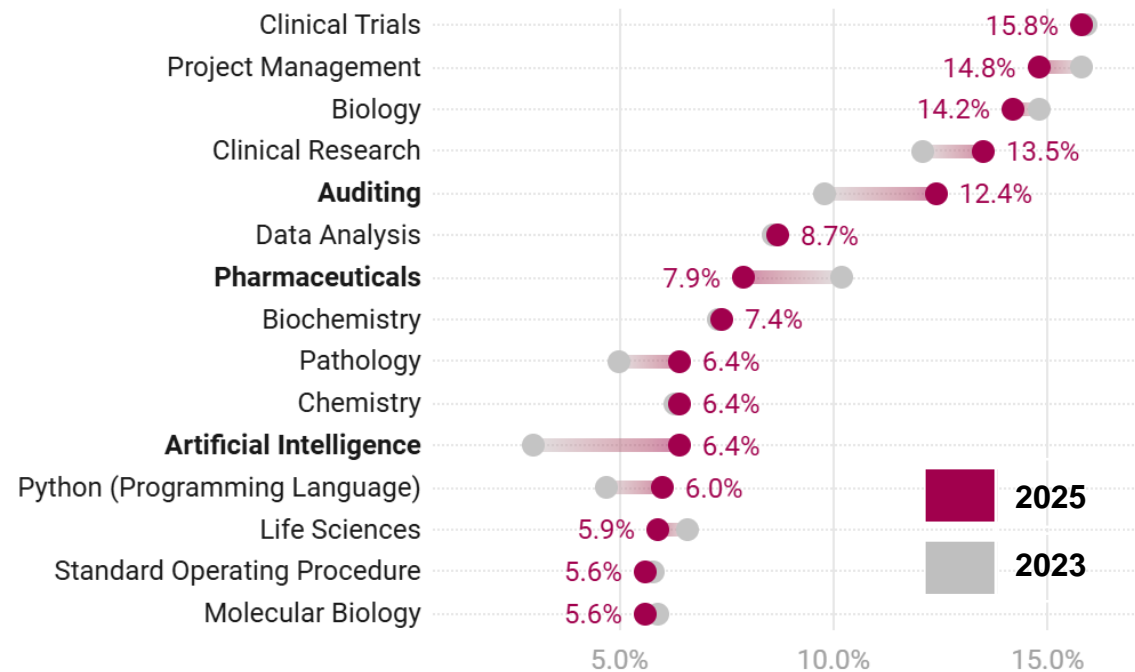
- Project managers
- Data managers
- Research associates
- Operations managers
- Sales and business development professionals
- Marketing and advertising professionals
- Data analysts
- Programmers



# Skill needs continue to evolve but a mix of technical and transferable skills remain essential to life science roles

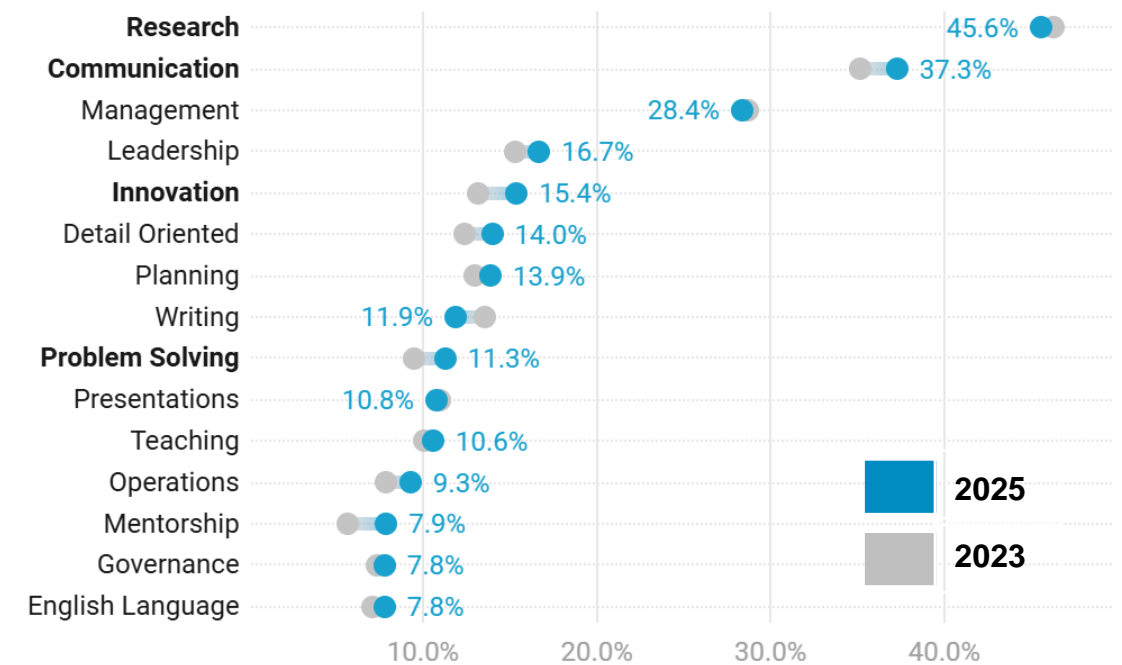
## Top specialised skills sought across LS roles

Frequency with which skills are mentioned in online job postings | London  
Nov - Oct 2025 vs 2023



## Top transferable skills sought across LS roles

Frequency with which skills are mentioned in online job postings | London  
Nov - Oct 2025 vs 2023



Source: GLA Economics analysis of Lightcast, 2025. Note: selected life sciences occupations identified by GLA Economics. Even within a sector, skill needs can vary considerably between specific roles.

# Looking ahead, wider **structural** and **policy** trends will shape employer demands and skills provision



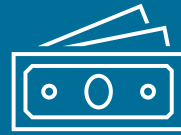
## Ongoing population change –

increased demand for health and care



## Changes in GenAI, quantum & digital –

reshaping job content, demand and discovery opportunities



## Employer confidence & costs –

fragile business environment, lower investment



## Skills system reforms –

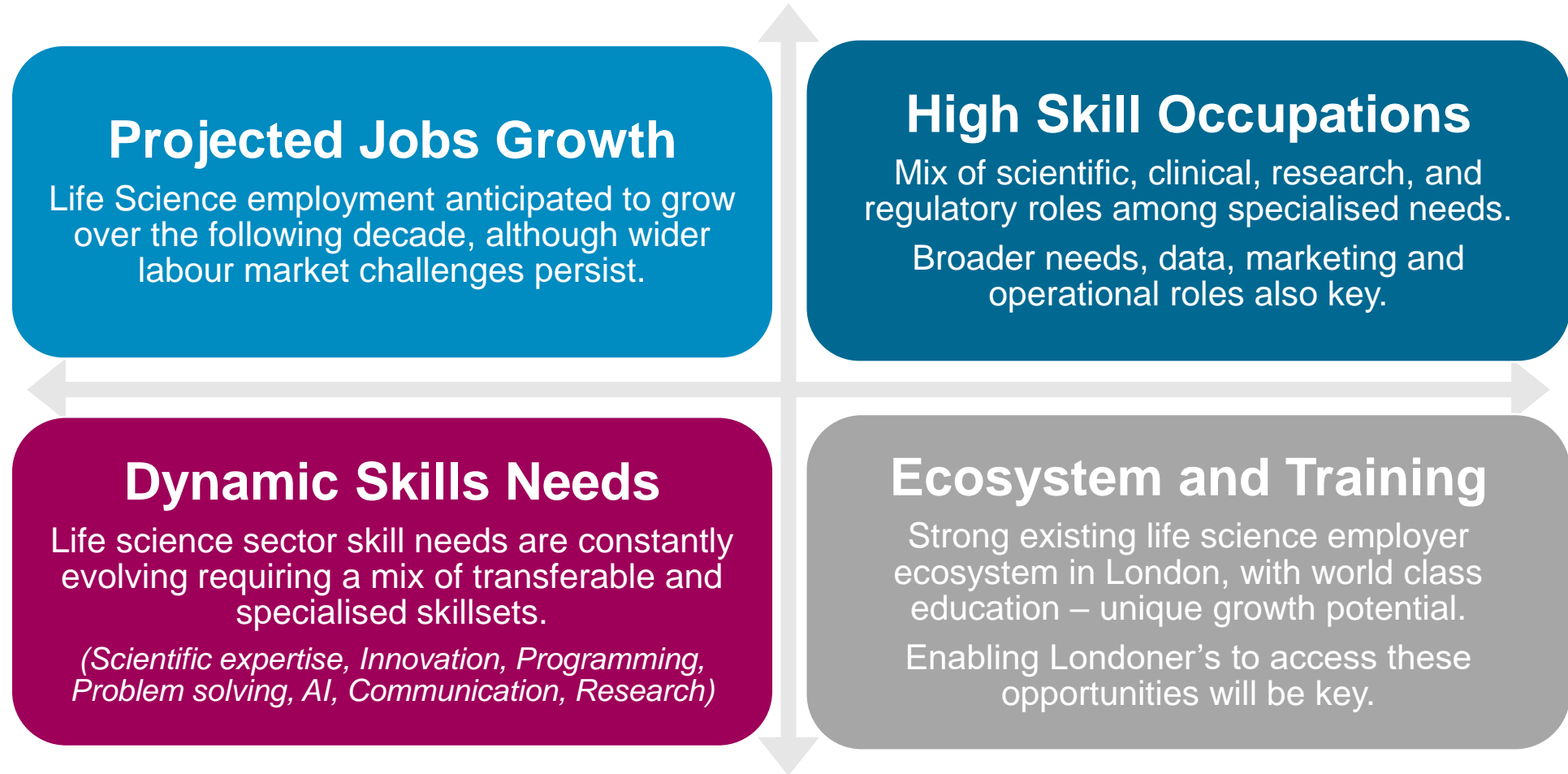
changing funding and provision



## Immigration rules –

tighter access to workers, especially in lower-paid roles

# Key Takeaways





# Comments or questions?

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