

Clinical psychologist

Clinical psychologists work with people of all ages on a wide range of psychological difficulties in mental and physical health.

This can include anxiety, depression, psychosis, 'personality disorder', eating disorders, addictions, learning disabilities and family or relationship issues.

Clinical psychologists work with individuals as well as teams and organisations to develop and support psychological practice.

You could also be a clinical associate in psychology (CAP), a new role in the NHS which is aligned to clinical psychology.

Working life

Psychology is the study of how people think and behave – a combination of science and practice. Using direct observation, interviews and techniques such as psychometric testing, you'll make an assessment of a patient's problem. Psychological intervention requires shared decision making with the service user, and often carers and family members.

You will work in partnership with service users to design and implement interventions to overcome their condition or improve their quality of life. This will usually take place over a series of individual, couple, family or group sessions. Clinical psychologists deliver psychological therapy but also use their scientist-practitioner training to address psychological issues by training practitioners, supervising staff, undertaking research or clinically leading teams.

Clinical psychologists are trained to work with individuals, families and groups of different ages experiencing psychological distress or behavioural problems which disrupt their everyday functioning and wellbeing. They aim to reduce distress and to enhance and promote psychological well-being, minimise exclusion and inequalities and enable service users to engage in meaningful relationships and valued work and leisure activities.

Clinical psychologists are trained to work with individuals, families and groups.

As a clinical psychologist, you will draw on your scientific knowledge to bring about positive change. Clinical psychologists are trained in [cognitive behavioural therapy](#) ^[1] as well as at

least one other major psychotherapeutic approach. You will provide individual therapy, and work with couples or families, as well as teams and services. You will also provide supervision and support to other professionals and teams and develop services and carry out research.

Specialising in clinical neuropsychology

You may be able to specialise in clinical neuropsychology. Clinical neuropsychologists work in the assessment and rehabilitation of people with brain injury or neurological disorder. They are specially trained to understand the relationship between brain and neuropsychological function. Brain injuries and neurological illnesses can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves and it is a clinical neuropsychologist's job to assess and help to treat the effects of these problems. You could work across a range of health and social care providers and may work as part of multi-professional teams including neurosurgeons, neurologists and allied health professionals.

You will work in a specialist service and undertake the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology ^[2] (QICN). Criteria for the QICN involves completing a post-doctoral diploma in clinical neuropsychology and examination of a two-year portfolio of clinical neuropsychology cases. You will then be eligible for entry onto the BPS Specialist Register of Clinical Neuropsychologists ^[3].

Clinical associate in psychology

A clinical associate in psychology (CAP) is a mental health professional who provides psychologically informed interventions under the supervision of a fully qualified clinical psychologist, based on a psychological 'formulation' of the patient's difficulties. This is a simplified 'map' of how different aspects of the problem fit together and what could be keeping it going.

You will use formulations and assessment tools to work with people to find and deliver the best course of intervention, linked to evidence.

Unlike clinical psychologists, you will work only within the single area of practice you've trained in, such as children and young people's services, or adult mental health services.

Who will I work with?

As a clinical psychologist, you will specialise in work with a specific population, such as children and young people, adults of all ages, people with learning disabilities or people with neurological problems.

You may work as part of a multi-professional team including doctors ^[4], nurses ^[5], allied health professionals ^[6] and a range of other psychological professionals.

Some clinical psychologists also work for part of their week teaching and researching in their area of expertise.

Where will I work?

You are likely to work in some, or all, of the following settings:

- in hospitals
- in local clinics and health centres
- in community mental health teams
- in social services, schools and prisons
- Improving Access to Psychology Therapy ^[7] ([IAPT](#) ^[8]) services.

You will also liaise with members of community mental healthcare teams and other agencies such as the probation service and social services.

Training

Clinical Psychology training is a three year full time taught doctorate programme which includes teaching, supervision, and a salaried training post (paid at Agenda for Change ^[9] Band 6).

There are around 30 training programmes in the UK. To be eligible for training you need to have a degree in psychology recognised for the "Graduate Basis for Registration" by the British Psychological Society ^[10]. There is a high level of competition for places.

To become a CAP, you will undertake an apprenticeship run by an employer such as an NHS trust, linked to an integrated Master's degree. The apprenticeship programme takes 18 months to complete and is funded by the employer. The training includes elements of theory, research and practical skills and will qualify you to work as a practitioner in NHS services. Opportunities to apply for CAP apprenticeships are led by employing healthcare organisations, and advertised on the NHS Jobs website ^[11].

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) ^[12] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers.

While training, clinical psychologists will be paid at band 6 and after completing their training, they will be paid at band 7, with opportunities to progress to higher banding in your career. Clinical psychologists in the NHS work full or part time. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

CAP apprentices are usually paid at band 5 during their programme and band 6 on completion.

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**Where the role
can lead**

**Expand /
collapse**

Clinical psychologists work in health and social care settings including hospitals, health centres, community mental health teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and social services.

They often work as part of a team with other health professionals and practitioners. Most clinical psychologists are employed by the NHS.

After qualifying and gaining some clinical experience, you may decide to specialise in a particular area of work, such as clinical neuropsychology, working with offenders or people with dementia. You could apply for a trainee high intensity therapist position, enabling you to work under the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Initiative ([IAPT](#) ^[8]).

Some clinical psychologists decide to go into supervisory roles, clinical management ^[13] or clinical academic research ^[14]. You could apply for more senior positions e.g. consultant psychologist or head of a psychological service.

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**Job market and
vacancies**

**Expand /
collapse**

In January 2018, there were 22,960 practitioner psychologists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council ^[15].

The last recorded figures from 2011 show that there are over 8,000 NHS staff working in clinical psychology - a 16% increase since 2005. The British Psychological Society says that 95% of all clinical psychologists work in the NHS.

Most NHS organisations advertise their job vacancies on NHS Jobs [16], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at NHS Choices. [17]

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the [NHS Constitution](#) [18] apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by the NHS. Find out more about NHS values [19].

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Further information

Expand / collapse

- British Psychological Society [20]
- Health and Care Professions Council [21]
- Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology [22]
- Specialist register of clinical neuropsychologists [3]

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Find your course to become a clinical psychologist

Expand / collapse

Region

Type of qualification

Full or part time

Displaying 1 - 5 of 32 matches

DCLinPsy (Doctorate in Clinical Psychology)

Nottingham, University of Opens in a new window

View course Opens in a new window

[23]

- Region
 - East Midlands
- Type of course
 - Postgraduate/accelerated programme
- Full or part time
 - Full time
- Duration
 - 3 years
- Contact details
 - enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk [24]
 - 0115 951 5559
 - More information regarding the course webpage
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/medicine/applied-psychology/clinical...> [23]
- Admissions address
 - YANG Fujia Building
 - International House
 - Jubilee Campus
 - Wollaton Road
 - Nottingham
 - NG8 1BB
- Course webpage (All course links open in new window)
 - More information regarding the course webpage (link opens in new window)
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/medicine/applied-psychology/clinical...> [23]

DCLinPsych (Doctorate in Clinical Psychology)

Bath, University of Opens in a new window

View course Opens in a new window

[25]

- Region
 - South West
- Type of course
 - Postgraduate/accelerated programme
- Full or part time
 - Full time

Duration

3 years

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Contact details

- clinpsych@bath.ac.uk ^[26]
- 01225 383019
- More information regarding the course webpage
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/psychology/clinical/programme/> ^[25]

○ Admissions address

Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7AY

○ Course webpage (All course links open in new window)

More information regarding the course webpage (link opens in new window)
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/psychology/clinical/programme/> ^[25]

ClinPsyD (Clinical Psychology Doctorate)

Birmingham, University of Opens in a new window

View course Opens in a new window

^[27]

○ Region

West Midlands

Type of course

Postgraduate/accelerated programme

Full or part time

Full time

Duration

3 years

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Contact details

- clinpsy-d-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk ^[28]
- 0121 414 5476
- More information regarding the course webpage
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/combined/psychology/clinical-p...> ^[27]

○ Admissions address

Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

○ Course webpage (All course links open in new window)

More information regarding the course webpage (link opens in new window)
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/combined/psychology/clinical-psychology> [27]

ForenClinPsyD (Forensic Clinical Psychology Doctorate)

Birmingham, University of Opens in a new window

View course Opens in a new window

[29]

- Region
 - West Midlands
- Type of course
 - Postgraduate/accelerated programme
- Full or part time
 - Full time
- Duration
 - 4 years
- Contact details
 - forensicpsych-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk [30]
 - 0121 414 5476
 - More information regarding the course webpage
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/cpd/psych/forensic-clinical-psychology> [29]
- Admissions address
 - Edgbaston
 - Birmingham
 - B15 2TT
- Course webpage (All course links open in new window)
 - More information regarding the course webpage (link opens in new window)
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/cpd/psych/forensic-clinical-psychology> [29]

Candidates who complete the programme successfully will be eligible to become Chartered Forensic and Clinical Psychologists within the BPS and to apply for registration with the [HCPC](#) [31] as Forensic and Clinical Psychologists.

DClinPsych (Doctorate in Clinical Psychology)

Teesside University Opens in a new window

View course Opens in a new window

[32]

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- Region
 - North East
- Type of course
 - Postgraduate/accelerated programme
- Full or part time
 - Full time
- Duration
 - 3 years
- Contact details
 - ssshladmissions@tees.ac.uk ^[33]
 - 01642 384491
 - More information regarding the course webpage
https://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Psychology/Doctorate_Counselling_Psy
^[32]
- Admissions address
 - Middlesbrough
 - Tees Valley
 - TS1 3BA
- Course webpage (All course links open in new window)
 - More information regarding the course webpage (link opens in new window)
https://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Psychology/Doctorate_Counselling_Psy
^[32]
- Load more Loadmore Page ^[34]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Counselling psychologist](#) ^[35]
- [Forensic psychologist](#) ^[36]
- [Health psychologist](#) ^[37]
- [Adult psychotherapist](#) ^[38]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist>

Links

- [1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Cognitive_behavioural_therapy
- [2] <https://www.bps.org.uk/qualifications/clinical-neuropsychology>
- [3] <https://www.bps.org.uk/lists/SRCN>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/psychiatry>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/resources/careers-nursing>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals>
- [7] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/iapt/>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#IAPT>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [10] <http://A clinical associate in psychology CAP is a mental health professional who provides psychologically informed interventions under the supervision of a fully qualified practitioner psychologist, based on a psychological map of the patient's difficulties or 'formulation'". You will use>

formulations and assessment tools to work with people to find and deliver the best course of intervention, linked to evidence. However, unlike Clinical Psychologists, you will CAPs work only within the single area of practice you've that they trained in, such as children and young people's services, or adult mental health services.

[11] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

[13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/clinical-manager>

[14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/developing-your-health-career/clinical-academic-careers>

[15] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>

[16] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[17] <http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search>

[18] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NHS_Constitution

[19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

[20] <http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-in-psychology>

[21] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

[22] <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/>

[23] <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/courses/medicine/applied-psychology/clinical-psychology-dclinsy.aspx>

[24] <mailto:enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk>

[25] <http://www.bath.ac.uk/psychology/clinical/programme/>

[26] <mailto:clinpsych@bath.ac.uk>

[27] <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/combined/psychology/clinical-psych-doctorate.aspx>

[28] <mailto:clinpsyadmissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk>

[29] <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/cpd/psych/forensic-clinical-psychology.aspx>

[30] <mailto:forensicpsych-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk>

[31] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC>

[32]

[https://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Psychology/Doctorate_Counselling_Psychology_\(DCounsPsy\).cfm](https://www.tees.ac.uk/postgraduate_courses/Psychology/Doctorate_Counselling_Psychology_(DCounsPsy).cfm)

[33] <mailto:ssshladmissions@tees.ac.uk>

[34] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/313?page=1>

[35] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/counselling-psychologist>

[36] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/forensic-psychologist>

[37] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/health-psychologist>

[38] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/psychotherapist>