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Clinical psychologist

You'll 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.

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Working life

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 individual, and often their carers and family members.

You'll 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. You'll deliver psychological therapy but also train practitioners and other supervising staff, undertake research and lead teams of clinicians.

You'll be trained to work with individuals, families and groups of different ages experiencing psychological distress or behavioural problems which disrupt their everyday functioning and wellbeing. You'll 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.

You'll will draw on your scientific knowledge to bring about positive change. You're trained in cognitive behavioural therapy [3] as well as at least one other major psychotherapeutic approach. You'll provide individual therapy, and work with couples or families, as well as teams and services. You'll also provide supervision and support to other professionals and teams and develop services and carry out research.

Danielle Pettman

Trainee clinical psychologist

> The best part about my training is the breadth of work.

Read Danielle's story [4]

Training

Training is a three year full time taught doctorate programme which includes teaching, supervision, and a salaried training post paid at Agenda for Change [5] Band 6.

Entry requirements

You'll need a psychology degree recognised for the "Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership " by the British Psychological Society [6]. There is also a high level of competition for places on the 30 training programmes in the UK.

You'll also be asked to show how you think the values [7] of the NHS Constitution [8] apply in your everyday work.

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 [9], nurses [10], allied health professionals [11] 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 [12] (IAPT) services.

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

Pay and benefits

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC [13]) 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.

Where the role can lead

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 also specialise in specific psychological therapies. For example you could work in NHS Talking Therapies services if you have undertaken a Doctorate that is also accredited by the British Association of Behavioural And Cognitive Psychotherapies [14] (BABCP, Level 2). Or you could specialise in dialectical behaviour therapy or family and systemic psychotherapy [15] by undertaking further training.

Some clinical psychologists decide to go into supervisory roles, clinical management [16] or clinical academic research [17]. You could apply for more senior positions e.g. consultant psychologist or head of a psychological service.

If you start NHS-funded training from April 2022, you will normally be unable to access further NHS-funded training for a new occupation in the psychological professions until two years after your qualifying exam board. Visit the funding for psychological professions training programmes web page [18] for more information about NHS funding.

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 [19] (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 [20].

- **Find your course to become a clinical psychologist**

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Clinical Psychology

Staffordshire University

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- Qualification
  Professional Doctorate
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  3 Years
  Leading to a career in
  Psychology (clinical)
- Contact details
  enquiries@staffs.ac.uk [22]
  01782 294000
- Region
  West Midlands
  Admissions address
  College Road
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  ST4 2DE
  England

Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD)

University of Manchester

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  ClinPsyD
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  36 Months
  Leading to a career in
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  clinpsyd@manchester.ac.uk [24]
  +44 (0)161 306 0402
- Region
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  Admissions address
  University Recruitment And Adm
  Oxford Road
  Manchester
  M13 9PL
  United Kingdom

Clinical Psychology

University of Glasgow

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  Study mode
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  Duration of the course
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  Leading to a career in
  Psychology (clinical)
- Contact details
  mvls-dclinpsy-entry-queries@glasgow.ac.uk [26]
  0141 330 4515
- Region
  Scotland
  Admissions address
  University of Glasgow
  University Avenue
  Glasgow
  G12 8QQ
  Scotland

Clinical Psychology

University of Birmingham

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  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  3 Years
  Leading to a career in

Psychology (clinical)
- Contact details
  postgraduate@contacts.bham.ac.uk [28]
- Region
  West Midlands

Admissions address
  Edgbaston
  Birmingham
  B15 2TU
  England

Clinical Psychology

Bangor University

View course [29] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  DClinPsy

Study mode
  Full-time

Duration of the course
  3 Years

Leading to a career in
  Psychology (clinical)
- Contact details
  postgraduate@bangor.ac.uk [30]
  01248 383762
- Region
  Wales

Admissions address
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Other roles that may interest you

- Counselling psychologist [32]
- Forensic psychologist [33]
- Health psychologist [34]
- Adult psychotherapist [35]

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