

Counselling psychologist

Counselling psychology deals with a wide range of mental health problems that may occur such as common mental health disorders including depression, in addition to eating disorders, psychosis, personality disorder, negative life events, bereavement, domestic violence, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, traumas and relationship issues.

This page has information on the role of a counselling psychologist. There are also links to further information.

Working life

Counselling psychologists consider how people relate, how they think and behave, their experiences of the world and how they function in their everyday life. This will include exploring people's social, economic, cultural, spiritual and physical health experiences. Counselling psychologists use psychological and psychotherapeutic theory and research. They work to reduce psychological distress and to promote the well-being of individuals, groups and families.

The relationship between a psychologist and client is considered to be central for counselling psychologists as it helps to inform the understanding of particular psychological difficulties as it applies to clients. As part of counselling psychology training and continued professional development, counselling psychologist's engage in personal therapy as a client as they may bring aspects of themselves to their work, derived from their training, wider knowledge, and lived experience.



Counselling psychologists examine a person's experience and explore underlying issues.

Where will I work?

Working within the NHS as a counselling psychologist, you'll work in general and psychiatric hospitals and GP surgeries. You may also work within:

- private hospitals
- independent practices
- industry
- public and private corporate institutions

Many counselling psychologists also work in academia, teaching, social justice, advocacy and researching in their area of expertise.

Who will I work with?

Counselling psychologists work with individuals, (children, young people, adults and older adults), couples, families, with groups and at an organisational and community level.

Counselling psychologists may work as part of multi-professional teams that include doctors ^[1], nurses ^[2] and allied health professionals ^[3]. Counselling psychologists could also be in management and leadership roles and contribute to the design and implementation of mental

health services.

Want to learn more?

- [Find out more about the entry requirements for counselling psychology.](#) [4]
- [Find out more about the training and development in counselling psychology.](#) [5]

- Pay and conditions

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\) pay scales](#) [6]. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers.

After completing their training counselling psychologists will be paid at band 7. Psychologists in the NHS will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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Once you have qualified as a counselling psychologist, there are a wide range of opportunities. With further experience you could qualify for the Register of Psychologists Specialising in psychotherapy and become a clinical supervisor. You could apply for more senior positions e.g. head of a psychology service or consultant psychologist. As psychology relies heavily on research, you could contribute to the development of the profession through research work and teaching. You could apply for a trainee [high intensity therapist position](#) [7], enabling you to work under the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies initiative ([IAPT](#) [8]).

[More information on training and development in counselling psychology.](#) [5]

- Job market and vacancies

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In January 2018, there were 22,960 practitioner psychologists registered with the [Health and Care Professions Council](#) [9].

The last recorded figures show that there are over nearly 3,000 counselling psychologists in the UK.

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [10], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at [NHS Choices](#) [11].

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](#)

[12]

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](#) ^[13]

- Further information

Expand / collapse

- [British Psychological Society](#) ^[14]
- [Health and Care Professions Council](#) ^[15] ^[15]

Other roles that may interest you

- [High intensity therapist](#) ^[16]
- [Psychological wellbeing practitioner](#) ^[17]
- [Psychotherapist](#) ^[18]
- [Clinical psychologist](#) ^[19]

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

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/psychiatry>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/resources/careers-nursing>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/counselling-psychologist/entry-requirements-and-training>
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