

Counselling psychologist

Counselling psychologists treat people by examining their experiences and exploring underlying issues.

You'll treat a wide range of mental health problems, such as:

- depression and anxiety
- eating disorders
- psychosis
- 'personality disorder'
- negative life events
- bereavement
- domestic violence, sexual, emotional and physical abuse
- trauma
- relationship issues.



Life as a counselling psychologist

You will 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 wellbeing of individuals, groups and families. The relationship between you and your patient will be central to understanding particular psychological difficulties and how they apply to them.

You will work with individuals, (children, young people, adults and older adults), couples, families, with groups and at an organisational and community level. You may work as part of multi-professional teams including doctors, nurses and allied health professionals and a range of other psychological professionals.

In a management or leadership role, you could contribute to the design and implementation of services for patients.

Working within the NHS as a counselling psychologist, you could work in:

- mental health services
- GP surgeries
- hospitals
- other health settings

You could also work in academia, teaching, social justice, advocacy or research in your area of expertise.

You will be provided with ongoing supervision to help you engage in self-reflection, seek and respond to feedback, and develop your professional knowledge and skills.

Dr Rebecca Morland

Consultant counselling psychologist

The opportunity to support positive change for each individual I work with is so rewarding.

[Read Rebecca's story](#) ^[1]

How much can I earn?

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll be on a national pay and conditions system called [Agenda for Change](#) ^[2] (AfC ^[3]).

There are nine pay bands. After completing your training, you'll be paid at band 7, with opportunities to progress to higher banding as your career develops.

Terms and conditions can vary if you are employed outside the NHS.

The relationship between you and your patient will be central to understanding particular psychological difficulties.

How about the benefits?

As a counselling psychologist, you can:

- make a difference
- work flexible and part-time hours

If you're employed by the NHS, you'll also have good holiday entitlement and access to:

- an excellent pension scheme
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

You'll need a range of skills to be a counselling psychologist, including:

- a keen awareness of people and their behaviour
- a capacity for study and continued learning
- the ability to relate to a wide range of people
- excellent communication skills
- the ability to work on your own as well as in consultation with others
- a responsible, professional approach, respecting the confidentiality of patients
- emotional resilience and maturity.

You'll also need to be able to demonstrate the values of the NHS Constitution [4].

Entry requirements

To enter a counselling psychology training programme, you will need either an undergraduate or Master's degree in psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS) which enables eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership [5].

As well as this, you will need some experience working with adults or children with mental health problems in a voluntary or professional capacity.

How to become a counselling psychologist

To qualify as a counselling psychologist, you must complete a Health and Care Professions Council [6] (HCPC [7])-accredited practitioner doctoral degree, which requires at least 450 hours of supervised counselling practice over three or more years. These hours should be undertaken in a variety of settings. You will also have to receive therapy yourself during training.

You should apply directly to the provider institution. To help recognise the relationship between personal development and professional practice, you will be required to undertake personal therapy yourself as part of your training and continued professional development.

Where a career as a counselling psychologist can take you

Once you have qualified as a counselling psychologist, there is a wide range of opportunities available. You could apply for more senior positions, such as consultant psychologist or head of a psychology service. As psychology relies heavily on research, you could contribute to the development of the profession through research work and teaching.

You could also apply for a trainee high intensity therapist position, enabling you to work in an NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression service (formerly IAPT).

It's important to note that a two-year psychological professions funding rule policy was implemented on 1 April 2022. This means that if you start NHS-funded psychological professions training from April 2022, you won't be eligible for NHS funding for further psychological profession training for two years from the expected completion date of your first training, where it would lead to a change in your job role. ? ?

Visit the [funding for psychological professions training programmes web page](#) ^[8] for more information about NHS funding.

Find your course to become a counselling psychologist

Region

- Any - ▼

Type of qualification

- Any - ▼

Full or part time

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Counselling psychology

Bristol, University of the West of England

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- Duration of the course
 - 3 years
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 - Psychology (counselling)
- Contact details
 - admissions@uwe.ac.uk ^[10]
 - +44 (0)1173 283333
- Region
 - South West
- Admissions address
 - University of the West of England
 - Frenchay Campus
 - Coldharbour Lane
 - Bristol
 - BS16 1QY
 - United Kingdom

Counselling psychology (Professional Doctorate)

University of Wolverhampton

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- Contact details
 - enquiries@wlv.ac.uk ^[12]
 - 01902 32 22 22
- Region
 - West Midlands
- Admissions address
 - Wulfruna Street
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University of Wolverhampton

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- Duration of the course
 - 6 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Psychology (counselling)
- Contact details
 - enquiries@wlv.ac.uk ^[12]
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- Region
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- Admissions address
 - Wulfruna Street
 - Wolverhampton
 - WV1 1LY

Qualification in counselling psychology

British Psychological Society, The

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 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Psychology (counselling)
- Contact details

counselling.qualification@bps.org.uk ^[14]

0116 252 9505

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• Further information

- [British Psychological Society](#) ^[15]
- [Health and Care Professions Council](#) ^[16] ^[16]

Other roles that may interest you

- [High intensity therapist](#) ^[17]
- [Psychological wellbeing practitioner](#) ^[18]
- [Adult psychotherapist](#) ^[19]
- [Clinical psychologist](#) ^[20]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/counselling-psychologist?page=2>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/counselling-psychologist/real-life-story-rebecca-morland> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-constitution> [5] <https://www.bps.org.uk/graduate-membership-gmbpss> [6] <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC> [8] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health/psychological-professions/nhs-funding-psychological-professions-training-programmes> [9] <https://courses.uwe.ac.uk/LC5811/counselling-psychology> [10] [mailto: admissions@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwe.ac.uk) [11] <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/courses/professional-doctorate-counselling-psychology/> [12] [mailto: enquiries@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@wlv.ac.uk) [13] <https://www.bps.org.uk/qualification-counselling-psychology> [14] <mailto:>

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