Forensic psychologist

Forensic psychology applies psychological theory to criminal investigation, understanding psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour, and the treatment of those who have committed offences.

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

Working life?

Forensic psychologists work with all aspects of the criminal justice system from the psychological aspects of investigation and legal process through to offending behaviour and application of psychological methods to reduce the impact of this and future re-offending.

As a forensic psychologist, you'll work in the treatment of offenders in a range of areas including sexual offending, violence and aggression, interpersonal and social skills and intervention to help stop illicit drug and or alcohol use. Most of your work will be done in association with the police, probation services, prisons and young offender institutions, trying to understand the psychological problems leading to criminal behaviour and looking for ways to prevent it.

Your work may include:

- piloting and implementing new treatment programmes
- reducing stress for staff and prisoners
- providing hard research evidence to support practice
- undertaking statistical analysis for prisoner profiling
- giving expert evidence in court
- advising parole boards and mental health tribunals
- crime analysis?
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**Who will I work with?**

Forensic psychologists work with a range of people, including:

- those who have chronic difficulties
- those at risk of offending as a consequence of their behaviour
- family members
- victims
- the public affected by crime

Whilst this usually applies to adults, some specialised forensic psychologists work with young offenders and within the youth justice system.

**Where will I work??**

The largest single employer of forensic psychologists in the UK is HM Prison Service, although forensic psychologists are also employed by:

- the NHS
- private healthcare providers
- specialist mental health settings (such as secure hospitals?)
- social services
- offender management services (such as police and probation)
- academic departments, teaching, supervising, and researching in their area of expertise.

**Want to learn more?**

- Find information on the entry requirements for forensic psychology [1]?
- Find information on training and development in forensic psychology [2]

**Pay and conditions**

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the?Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales [3]. ?This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers.? After completing their training, forensic 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 psychologist, there are a wide range of opportunities. 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 [4], enabling you to work under the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies initiative (IAPT).

More information on training and development in forensic psychology. [1]

**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 [5].?

There are over 2,000 forensic psychologists in the UK.?

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on?NHS Jobs [6], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at?NHS Choices [7].

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 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. [8]

**Further information**

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Other roles that may interest you

- Clinical psychologist [12]
- High intensity therapist [13]
- Forensic psychiatry [14]
- Psychological wellbeing practitioner [15]

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

Links
[8] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution