

Adult psychotherapist

Adult psychotherapists work with adults to assess and treat a range of emotional, social or mental health issues.

You'll help adults tackle problems such as behavioural issues, common challenges such as anxiety and depression or more complex or severe issues, such as psychosis or a personality disorder diagnosis. ?



Working life

Treatment usually begins with an assessment which takes place over a number of sessions between you and the patient.

Having trained in one or more psychotherapeutic approaches, you will provide therapy to help people change the ways they think and behave or find better ways to cope. This therapy will provide space for them to express their feelings and gain a deeper insight into the issues they face. This could include group sessions.

Where will I work?

You are likely to work in:

- hospitals
- local clinics and health centres
- in the community
- an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service

You'll also work in a multi-disciplinary team including [mental health nurses](#) ^[1], [psychiatrists](#) ^[2] and a range of other [psychological professionals](#) ^[3].

Entry requirements

To practise as an adult psychotherapist, you'll need to undertake appropriate recognised training. You'll usually need an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject and/or be a qualified and experienced healthcare practitioner, such as a [psychiatrist](#) [2], [psychologist](#) [4], [mental health nurse](#) [1] or [social worker](#) [5].

To secure a place on a psychotherapy training course, you will also need to be able to demonstrate that you have relevant experience.

Employers will indicate through the job description/person specification exactly which qualifications they will consider when selecting applicants for psychotherapist roles.

Training

Training usually takes four years, combining study with clinical training under supervision and provided by a number of organisations, which are usually accredited by the [UK Council for Psychotherapy](#) [6] (UKCP), the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#) [7] or the [British Psychoanalytic Council](#) [8].

Clinical training consists of intensive treatment of patients carried out under supervision. Clinical discussions combining theory and practice are held throughout the period of training. Alongside your training, you will be expected to undertake your own personal therapy to build your self-awareness and expand on your ability to relate to others.

The application process for psychotherapy training is administered directly by the individual organisations running the courses.

Must-have skills

You'll need a range of skills to be a psychotherapist, 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
- self awareness
- the ability to empathise with others and make positive relationships
- an openness to addressing issues of prejudice and oppression

- **Pay and conditions**

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\)](#) [9] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers.

While training, you'll usually be paid at band 6. After completing their training, you'll be paid at band 7. Adult psychotherapists work full or part time. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

- **Where the role can lead**

As your professional experience and knowledge grows, you can move into more senior positions within psychotherapy services and beyond. There are opportunities to be involved in research and training people to become psychotherapists. As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles, you may also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation.

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](#) ^[10] for more information about NHS funding.

- **Job market and vacancies**

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) ^[11], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at [NHS Choices](#) ^[12].

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](#) ^[13] apply in your everyday work.

[Find out more about NHS values.](#) ^[14]

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

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Search

- **Further information**

- [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#) [7]
- [British Psychoanalytic Council](#) [15]
- [UK Council for Psychotherapy](#) [16]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Art therapist/art psychotherapist](#) [17]
- [Mental health nurse](#) [18]
- [Psychological wellbeing practitioner](#) [19]
- [Assistant psychologist](#) [20]

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