

# Psychotherapist

Psychotherapists help people to overcome stress, emotional and relationship problems or troublesome habits.?

This page has information on the role of a psychotherapist. It also has information on the entry requirements and training needed for the role.?

## Working life

You will work with adults or children and their families to help tackle problems eating disorders, aggressive behaviour, depression and the fall-out from family breakdown.?

*"The best bit about my role is seeing the patients get better. My role can be difficult as I hear about the traumatic and distressing parts of people's lives."*

Read Carolyn's story [1]



Treatment usually begins with an assessment which takes place over a number of sessions between you and the patient. These could be one or two detailed interviews, or a series of shorter discussions. You'll then aim to resolve it through further discussions. This could include group sessions.

When working with children, you might use toys and play to help them express their feelings and emotions. You'll also talk to parents and families, and consult with other health professionals involved in the patient's care.

## **Where will I work??**

You are likely to work in:?

Competition for the limited number of training places is fierce.

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

Child psychotherapists work in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CAMHS teams are based in the community and work with staff from many other children's services, including education and social services. They provide a number of interventions including mental health promotion and prevention, through to very specialist care for young people with mental health problems.

You'll also work in a multi-disciplinary team including mental health nurses [2], psychiatrists [3] and clinical psychologists [4].

## Entry requirements?

To practise as a psychotherapist, you'll need to undertake appropriate recognised training. You'll usually need a good class of honours degree in a relevant subject and/or be a qualified and experienced healthcare practitioner, such as a psychiatrist [3], psychologist [4], mental health nurse [2] or social worker [5].

Employers will indicate through the job description/person specification exactly which qualifications they will consider when selecting applicants for psychotherapist roles. Competition for the limited number of training places is fierce.

## 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 United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the Association of Child Psychotherapists or the British Psychoanalytic Council.

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.

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

## Financial support

The NHS offers a limited number of child psychotherapy training posts which are offered by a small number of NHS trusts, or as a partnership between an NHS trust and one of the training providers.

These posts provide varying levels of financial support for trainees, in exchange for clinical practice, usually undertaken at an NHS site.

Further information on NHS training posts and grants, is available directly from NHS trusts or from the individual training organisations.

## Skills required?

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
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- Pay and conditions

Expand / collapse

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [6] 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. You'll 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

Expand / collapse

As your professional experience and knowledge grows, you can move into more senior positions within psychotherapy services. 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 will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation.?

- Job market and vacancies

Expand / collapse

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on NHS Jobs [7], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at NHS Choices [8].

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 [9] apply in your everyday work.?

Find out more about NHS values. [10]

- Further information

Expand / collapse

- Association of Child Psychotherapists [11]
- British Psychoanalytic Council [12]
- United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy [13]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Art therapist/art psychotherapist [14]
- Mental health nurse [15]
- Psychological wellbeing practitioner [16]
- Assistant psychologist [17]

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

### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/psychotherapist/real-life-story-carolyn-nield>

- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/mental-health-nurse>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychiatry>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/clinical-psychologist>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/social-worker>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [7] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>
- [8] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>
- [9] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NHS\\_Constitution](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NHS_Constitution)
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>
- [11] <http://www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk/>
- [12] <http://www.bpc.org.uk/>
- [13] <http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/>
- [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapistart-psychotherapist>
- [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse>
- [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/psychological-wellbeing-practitioner>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/assistant-clinical-psychologist>