Psychological wellbeing practitioner

Psychological wellbeing practitioners are trained to assess and support people with common mental health problems – principally anxiety disorders and depression – in the self-management of their recovery.

This page has information on the role of a psychological wellbeing practitioner (PWP). It also includes information on the training and entry requirements for the role.

"Knowing that I am making a difference to people’s lives is rewarding and inspiring." Valeria Souza, psychological well-being practitioner

Read Valeria’s story [1]

Working life?

PWPs use a range of psychological interventions and skills to support individuals with mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. PWPs work closely with other healthcare professionals including high intensity therapists, IAPT counsellors and employment advisers.

As a PWP you will:

- undertake patient-centred interviews
- identify areas where the person wishes to change how they feel, think or behave
- carry out thorough risk assessments
- provide a range of evidence-based psychological interventions including guided self-help based on cognitive behavioural therapy, online psychological treatment programmes and psycho-educational groups and workshops
- liaise with other agencies and provide information about services such as employment and housing to patients

PWPs work alongside high intensity therapists and other clinicians delivering evidence based psychological therapies, as well as employment advisers and GPs.

Who will I work with?
Treatment can be delivered on a one-to-one basis either face to face, via telephone or online. Treatment can also be provided in a group setting. PWP s work with adults from many different backgrounds.

PWP s work alongside high intensity therapists [2] and other clinicians delivering evidence-based psychological therapies, as well as employment advisers and GPs [3].

**Where will I work?**

PWP s work within an Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) [4] service which may be within a clinical commissioning group, specialist mental health trust or in the third or private sector. PWP s may be based in a GP practice, healthcare centre or community venue such as a library or leisure centre.

**Training?**

All PWP s will complete an accredited IAPT training course. The courses typically consist of 45 days of academic work (one day per week) and four days supervised practice, usually distributed over an academic year. Whilst in training PWP s are employed by a local IAPT service.

The PWP training is open to people with a range of experience. Those with a degree will typically undertake a postgraduate certificate and those without a degree will normally undertake an equivalent graduate-level qualification. The training courses are accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

You need to apply for a post as a trainee or apprentice PWP in an IAPT service to access the training. See the section on Job market and vacancies below.

A level 6 apprenticeship for psychological wellbeing practitioners has been approved and is a great opportunity for people without a degree but with useful life experience, or who'd like to make a career change and contribute to the local community. To get onto an apprenticeship, you will need to apply for an apprentice position with a healthcare provider. You can search for vacancies on the NHS Jobs [5] website and Find an Apprenticeship [6] website.

**Entry requirements and experience needed**

Training places are open to either:

- people from the local community, with a wide range of life experience who will be trained to a graduate level. An apprenticeship is a great opportunity for people without a degree to undertake the training
- graduates or those who can demonstrate that they can meet the academic requirements of the post graduate level qualification

Experience of working with people with mental health problems is desirable, excellent interpersonal skills are essential.

- Pay and conditions

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  Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [7] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Trainees and apprentices are appointed at band 4 and will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week. Once qualified as a PWP,
you would usually progress to a band 5 position. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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As a qualified and experienced PWP you can apply for more senior posts at band 6, band 7 band 8a, with additional management and leadership responsibilities or clinical specialism.

The role is evolving and there are increasing opportunities for progression and career development. Some examples of where the role can lead include:

- **Long-term conditions (LTCs).** Working with patients with LTCs - diabetes, COPD, chronic pain etc; provide training to other healthcare professionals; develop resources for LTC patients; link up with patient groups.
- **Perinatal.** Partnership working with midwives, health visitors and specialist perinatal mental health services, pathway developments, patient groups in community settings, networking with children's centres.
- **Universities and colleges.** Set up pathways and deliver interventions within colleges and universities.
- **Occupational health.** Provide PWP treatment interventions within the stepped care model of psychological treatment in NHS Trust Occupational Health services.
- **Supervision.** Complete training in PWP supervision and provide case management and clinical skills supervision to other PWPs.
- **Management.** Part of the service management team responsible for line management, performance management, strategic direction, recruitment and staffing capacity and overseeing projects.
- **Service promotion and leadership.** Develop and oversee community projects and liaise with community partners and local organisations.
- **Clinical advisor.** Advisor to clinical networks and PWP Specialist Interest Groups both regional and national.
- **Research.** Undertaking research as part of the PWP role in service or an academic institution.

See Further information below for links to blogs written by PWPs who have progressed in their PWP careers. Some PWPs also apply to train as high intensity therapists [2], clinical psychologists [8], counselling psychologists [9] and counsellors [10].

- Job market and vacancies

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Applications for trainee PWP posts need to be made to an organisation providing an Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) [11] service. These can be within an NHS organisation or within a third sector organisation.

Selection for training places is carried out jointly between service and academic course providers. If successful, both a job and a training place are offered.

Trainee and apprenticeship vacancies can be found on the NHS Jobs website [12], IAPT course provider websites or may be advertised locally within newspapers or local job sites. Vacancies may also be advertised on charity websites - such as Mind [13], Rethink [14] and Turning Point [15]. Apprenticeship vacancies may also be found on the Find an Apprenticeship [6] website and see the Institute for apprenticeships website.
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 NHS values apply in your everyday work.

Find out more about NHS values [17].

- Further information

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General background information

- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies [4]? (for general information about IAPT, but not for job vacancies)
- PWP Best Practice Guide [18]?

Blogs written by PWPs who have progressed in their PWP careers:

- The role of Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner and career progression [19]? Heather Stonebank
- A Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner career pathway: an exciting and diverse role [20]? Carolyn Houghton

**Other roles that may interest you**

- Clinical psychologist [8]
- High intensity therapist [2]
- Mental health nurse [21]
- Counselling psychologist [9]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/psychological-wellbeing-practitioner

Links
