

Clinical associate in psychology

Clinical associates in psychology provide psychological interventions under the supervision of a fully qualified practitioner psychologist.

You'll support people who have longstanding and complex problems, using psychological theory and evidence to find the best interventions to meet their needs. You will also be involved in service evaluation or research. It's a new role and is closely aligned with clinical psychologists ^[1].



Life as a clinical associate in psychology

You'll work alongside a range of psychological and other professionals to provide people with access to psychologically informed mental health and wellbeing services.

By creating a psychological formulation – a simplified 'map' of how different aspects of a person's problem fit together and what could be keeping it going – you develop a picture of their difficulties. You'll then provide effective and evidence-based psychological interventions that are most appropriate to their needs.

You'll conduct research and use tools to evaluate psychological interventions and improve the quality of clinical practice. You'll also provide support, guidance and training to others to inform psychological interventions across a range of service settings.

You'll work autonomously but with the support and under the supervision of a practitioner psychologist. Supervision will help you to engage in self-reflection, seek and respond to feedback and develop your professional knowledge and skills.

You will work with specific populations. For example, you might work in children and young people's services or adult mental health services, depending on the area you have trained in.

You are likely to work in one or several of the following:

- community mental health teams
- hospitals or inpatient settings
- secure or medium-secure mental health settings
- specialist mental health services

You'll be part of a multidisciplinary team with professionals from different backgrounds, such as clinical/counselling psychologists, psychological therapists, community mental health nurses [2], psychological wellbeing practitioners [3], social workers [4], occupational therapists [5], psychiatrists [6], support workers [7], employment specialists [8] and peer support workers [9].

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 [10] ([AfC](#) [11]). There are nine pay bands and as an apprentice you'll be paid at band 5. After completing your apprenticeship this goes up to band 6 and you'll have opportunities to progress with experience.

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

How about the benefits?

You can:

- be part of an exciting new role to help people with complex and longstanding mental health problems
- 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:

- fully funded training plus a salary while you train
- an excellent pension scheme

- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

You'll need a range of skills including:

- a keen awareness of people and their behaviour
- a capacity for study and continued learning
- excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build trusting and productive relationships with a wide range of people in a variety of situations
- strong written and verbal communication skills tailored to a variety of audiences
- 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 ^[12].

Entry requirements

Training is an 18-month full-time, level 7-degree apprenticeship, which leads to a Master's qualification. Training is hosted by an employer, such as an NHS trust, alongside training on a university-validated degree programme. Training is divided between work-based experience (up to four days a week) and academic teaching and study.

The apprenticeship includes elements of theory, research and practical skills and will qualify you to work as a practitioner in NHS services.

Visit the British Psychological Society - Getting Started ^[13] for more information about what to study at school or college and how to find an accredited degree course.

How to become a clinical associate in psychology

Your first step is to apply to healthcare organisations offering clinical associate in psychology apprenticeships.

To apply, you'll need either:

- an accredited degree in psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS) which enables eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership or
- to have completed a BPS-accredited postgraduate psychology conversion course

You will also need experience (paid or voluntary) of working in health, mental health and/or psychological service settings.

You can find training places by searching for 'clinical associate psychologist apprenticeship', 'trainee clinical associate psychologist' or 'clinical associate in psychology' on the NHS Jobs website ^[14]. You can also see some current vacancies below.

Where a career as a clinical associate in psychology can

take you

The role is fulfilling in itself, but you could move into related fields such as psychological therapy and applied psychology.

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 ^[15] for more information about NHS funding.

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Live vacancies

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Other roles that may interest you

- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics ^[16]
- Cellular sciences ^[17]
- Infection sciences ^[18]
- Microbiology healthcare scientist ^[19]

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