

Psychiatry of intellectual disability (PID)

Psychiatrists working in intellectual disability assess and treat people with intellectual or learning disabilities.

This can include the assessment and management of neurodevelopmental disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity, autism spectrum disorder and epilepsy.



Life as an intellectual disability psychiatrist

People with intellectual disability (sometimes called learning disability) are more likely to have mental health problems so you'll provide patient-centric care to improve their quality of life.

Your patients will usually be adults aged over 18 years as younger patients tend to be seen by a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

You'll be required to adopt a [holistic](#) ^[1] approach as patients with intellectual disability often have physical conditions such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy.

Patients often present non-specifically. For example, they demonstrate withdrawal or a change in behaviour. You'll need to investigate and establish the cause in your diagnosis.

Common mental health conditions you'll treat include:

- anxiety
- bipolar disorder
- depression
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- schizophrenia

You'll work as part of a multidisciplinary team and be expected to collaborate with colleagues and a patient's family and carers.

Psychiatry is an interesting academic discipline, whether you are interested in the biological basis of mental health problems (e.g. dementia in people with Down's syndrome, behavioural phenotypes of genetic disorders), or the development of innovative service models or forensic

aspects of intellectual disability.

How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) ^[2] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) ^[3] and consultants on the '[Pay for doctors](#)' ^[4] page.

How about the benefits?

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients

In addition, intellectual disability psychiatrists need to demonstrate:

- empathy and compassion and the ability to treat others with understanding and respect
- respect for people with intellectual disabilities and the contribution they make to society
- patience
- excellent listening skills
- willingness to build relationships with their patients

Entry requirements

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you'll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You'll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You'll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

What are my chances of starting a career in psychiatry of intellectual disability?

In 2021, there were 254 consultants in psychiatry of intellectual disability working in the NHS in England. In 2020, there were 30 applications for 52 training places.

How to become an intellectual disability psychiatrist

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year [foundation programme](#) ^[5] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid [specialty training](#) ^[6] to become an intellectual disability psychiatrist, which will take a minimum of six years.

You may be able to train part time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

Where a career as an intellectual disability psychiatrist can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

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- **Consultant Psychiatrist in Intellectual Disability-Little Plumstead**

Norfolk, NR13 5EW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in Intellectual Disability-Little Plumstead job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[7]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist - Intellectual Disability**

Chesterfield, S44 5BL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist - Intellectual Disability job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[8]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist, Intellectual Disability - Pennine Lancashire**

Darwen, BB3 1AY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist, Intellectual Disability - Pennine Lancashire job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[9]

- **Locum Consultant Psychiatrist Intellectual Disability-Little Plumstead**

Norfolk, NR13 5EW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Psychiatrist Intellectual Disability-Little Plumstead job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[10]

- **Consultant Learning Disability Psychiatrist**

Swansea, SA6 6AH

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Learning Disability Psychiatrist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[11]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in Learning Disabilities**

Northampton, NN1 3EB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in Learning Disability**

Ashington, NE63 0EY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and wear (CNTW) NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in Learning Disability job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist (Community Forensic Learning Disabilities)**

Warrington, WA2 8WA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist \(Community Forensic Learning Disabilities\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in CAMHS Learning Disabilities**

Worcester, WR5 1JR

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in CAMHS Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[15]

- **COMMUNITY CAMHS LEARNING DISABILITY CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST**

Canterbury, CT2 8JY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

NELFT North East London Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for COMMUNITY CAMHS LEARNING DISABILITY CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[16]

- **Team Leader Learning Disabilities**

Bronllys, LD3 0LU

Salary:

£46840.00 to £53602.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Powys Teaching Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Team Leader Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[17]

- **Community Learning Disability Team Manager**

Brigg, DN20 8JH

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHSFT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Community Learning Disability Team Manager job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Clinical Team Leader - Learning Disabilities**

Preston, PR3 2JH

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Team Leader - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[19]

- **Deputy Manager - Adult Disability Service**

Guernsey, GY4 6UU

Salary:

£46152.00 to £62310.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

States of Guernsey

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Deputy Manager - Adult Disability Service job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Social Worker-Children's Disability Team**

Oxfordshire, OX1 1ND

Salary:

£37035.00 to £43693.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxfordshire County Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Social Worker-Children's Disability Team job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **Adult Disability Service - Deputy Manager**

Guernsey, GY4 6UU

Salary:

£46152.00 to £62310.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

States of Guernsey

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Adult Disability Service - Deputy Manager job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **Adult Safeguarding & Learning Disability Practitioner**

London, SW10 9NH

Salary:

£54320.00 to £60981.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Adult Safeguarding & Learning Disability Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **High Intensity Therapist- Learning Disability**

South Shields, NE34 8PS

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for High Intensity Therapist- Learning Disability job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities Professional Lead**

Swindon, SN25 4AN

Salary:

£62215.00 to £72293.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities Professional Lead job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[25]

- **Band 8A Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities**

Devizes, SN10 5DS

Salary:

£53755.00 to £60504.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 8A Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[26]

- **Specialist Speech & Language Therapist - Learning Disabilities**

Bodmin, PL31 2QE

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Speech & Language Therapist - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[27]

- **Senior Specialist Occupational Therapist - Learning Disabilities**

Grimsby, DN32 7DH

Salary:

£43906.00 to £50612.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Care Plus Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Specialist Occupational Therapist - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[28]

- **Clinical Nursing Specialist - Learning Disability & Autism**

London, W2 1NY

Salary:

£54320.00 to £60981.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Nursing Specialist - Learning Disability & Autism job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[29]

- **Band 8A Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities**

Swindon, SN25 4AN

Salary:

£53755.00 to £60504.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 8A Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[30]

- **Adult Disability Team Leader - Community Living**

Guernsey, GY4 6UU

Salary:

£38744.00 to £49970.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

States of Guernsey

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Adult Disability Team Leader - Community Living job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[31]

- **Learning Disabilities Support Workers (Days Only)**

Huddersfield, HD1 4HR

Salary:

£26208.00 to £27248.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cygnnet Health Care

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Learning Disabilities Support Workers \(Days Only\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[32]

- **Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities Professional Lead**

Devizes, SN10 5DS

Salary:

£62215.00 to £72293.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities](#)

[Professional Lead job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[33]

- **Children and Young Peoples Disability Social Worker**

Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Salary:

£42489.00 to £44524.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Wiltshire Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Children and Young Peoples Disability Social Worker](#)

[job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[34]

- **Bank Support Worker, Learning Disabilities, Complex Care**

Hereford, HR1 2PJ

Salary:

£16.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Airmid Staffing Ltd

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Support Worker, Learning Disabilities, Complex](#)

[Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[35]

- **Team Leader- Community Mental Health/Learning Disabilities**

Nottingham, NG2 7PG

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Team Leader- Community Mental Health/Learning](#)

[Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[36]

- **Childrens Learning Disability Support Worker, East Sussex**

Bexhill-on-sea, TN40 2DZ
Eastbourne, BN21 2UD

Salary:

£13.00 to £15.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Claimont Health LTD

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Childrens Learning Disability Support Worker, East Sussex job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[37]

- **Mental Health Liaison Clinician - Learning Disability and Autism**

Oxford, OX3 7JH

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Mental Health Liaison Clinician - Learning Disability and Autism job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[38]

- **Director of Nursing Mental Health and Learning Disabilities**

St Asaph, LL17 0JG

Salary:

£106967.00 to £123091.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Director of Nursing Mental Health and Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[39]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in Liaison Psychiatry**

Shrewsbury, SY3 8XQ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in Liaison Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[40]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in OPMH Psychiatry**

Weymouth, DT4 7TB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in OPMH Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[41]

- **Band 7 CAMHS Learning Disability PBS Deputy Lead/Clinician**

Leicester, LE2 2PL

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 7 CAMHS Learning Disability PBS Deputy Lead/Clinician job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[42]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in Old Age Psychiatry**

Colwyn Bay, LL29 8AT

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist in Old Age Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[43]

- **Further information**

The [Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) ^[44] has further information about being a psychiatrist of intellectual disability, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

Other roles that may interest you

- [General practitioner](#) ^[45]
- [Old age psychiatry](#) ^[46]
- [Liaison psychiatry](#) ^[47]
- [Knowledge and library services](#) ^[48]

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