

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

• **Live vacancies**

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- **Consultant in Psychiatry for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities**

Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY

Salary:

£110240.00 to £160951.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hywel Dda University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Psychiatry for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[7]

- **Training Programme Director - Intellectual Disabilities**

Manchester, M1 3BN

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

NHS England

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Training Programme Director - Intellectual Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[8]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[9]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist - Learning Disabilities (Enfield)**

Enfield, EN3 5BN

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North London NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist - Learning Disabilities \(Enfield\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[10]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[11]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist in CAMHS Learning Disability Team, Oxfordshire**

Oxford, OX3 7JH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford Health NHS Trust

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

- **Team Manager - Learning Disabilities**

Blyth, NE24 3AG

Salary:

£54489.00 to £58149.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumberland County Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Team Manager - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[16]

- **Lead Physiotherapist - Learning Disabilities**

Huntingdon, PE293AD

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Clinical Lead - Learning Disabilities**

Preston, PR3 2JH

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Lead - Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities**

Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY

Salary:

£46840.00 to £53602.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hywel Dda University Health Board

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

- **Clinical/Counselling Psychologist (Learning Disabilities)**

London, SE5 8AZ

Salary:

£54320.00 to £60981.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical/Counselling Psychologist \(Learning Disabilities\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Senior Specialist Learning Disability Dietitian**

Warwick, CV34 5BW

Salary:

£47810.00 to £54710.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Specialist Learning Disability Dietitian job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[25]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[26]

- **Consultant in Learning Disabilities - IOW**

Sandown, PO36 9EA

Salary:

£99532.00 to £131964.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Learning Disabilities - IOW job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[27]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[28]

- **Project Manager - Learning Disability and Autism**

Canterbury, CT1 1TJ

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Project Manager - Learning Disability and Autism job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[29]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[30]

- **Mental Capacity Assessor, Learning Disability Liaison**

Taunton, TA1 5DA

Yeovil, BA21 4AT

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Mental Capacity Assessor, Learning Disability Liaison job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[31]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[32]

- **Support Worker - Learning Disabilities Admission Avoidance**

Radcliffe, Bury, M26 2TP

Salary:

£24625.00 to £25674.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Pennine Care NHS FT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Support Worker - Learning Disabilities Admission](#)

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

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

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[35]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[36]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[37]

- **Starting Well Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Practitioner**

Ellesmere Port and Neston, CH65 9HE

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Starting Well Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[38]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[39]

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[40]

- **Learning Disability Crisis Response Intensive Support Practitioner**

Leicester, LE7 7GX

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Learning Disability Crisis Response Intensive Support Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[41]

- **Band 8a Clinical Psychologist - Learning Disabilities & Autism**

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 & Autism job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[42]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist - Forensic Psychiatry**

Bristol, BS16 1EG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

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

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[44]

◦ **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[45]

◦ **Lead Family Link Worker - Neurodivergence and Learning Disabilities**

Horley, RH1 1EB

Caterham, CR3 5XL

Salary:

£34872.71 to £41676.11

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Alliance for Better Care CIC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Lead Family Link Worker - Neurodivergence and Learning Disabilities job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[46]

• **Further information**

The [Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) ^[47] 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](#) ^[48]
- [Old age psychiatry](#) ^[49]
- [Liaison psychiatry](#) ^[50]
- [Knowledge and library services](#) ^[51]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Holistic> [2]
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