

PROSPECTS

Job profile

Clinical psychologist

If you have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, work well in a team and want to help improve people's health and well-being, consider a career as a clinical psychologist

As a clinical psychologist, your aim is to reduce the distress and improve the psychological well-being of your clients. Using psychological methods and research, you'll make positive changes to your clients' lives and offer various forms of treatment.

You'll work in partnership with your clients in order to diagnose, assess and manage their condition. They may have a variety of mental or physical health issues, such as:

- anxiety
- depression
- mental illness
- adjustment to physical illness
- neurological disorders
- addictive behaviours
- challenging behaviours
- eating disorders
- personal and family relationship problems
- learning disabilities.

You'll work with individuals, including children, adolescents and adults, as well as families, couples and groups in a range of settings. Collaborating with other professionals in multidisciplinary teams might be necessary in order to deal with your clients' complex issues.

Responsibilities

As a clinical psychologist, you'll need to:

- assess your clients' needs, abilities or behaviour using a variety of methods, including psychometric tests, interviews and direct observation of their behaviour
- devise and monitor appropriate treatment programmes, including therapy, counselling or advice, in collaboration with colleagues
- work as part of a multidisciplinary team alongside doctors, nurses, social workers, education professionals, health visitors, psychiatrists and occupational therapists
- offer therapy and treatments for issues relating to a range of mental health conditions
- develop and evaluate service provision for clients
- provide consultation to other professions, encouraging a psychological approach in their work
- counsel and support carers
- carry out applied research, adding to the evidence base of practice in a variety of healthcare settings.

More experienced clinical psychologists may be called on to write legal reports and act as expert witnesses. In these cases, you'll keep detailed paperwork about clients in order to monitor the progress of their treatments.

Salary

- Trainee clinical psychologists start at £26,565 (Band 6) of the NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) Pay Rates (<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>). After qualification, salaries within the NHS start at £31,696 (Band 7).
- More experienced psychologists can earn between £48,514 and £58,217 (Bands 8a and 8b).
- Consultant clinical psychologist roles typically range from £56,665 to £83,258 (Bands 8c and 8d).
- Heads of psychology services can earn in the region of £79,415 to £100,431 (Band 9).

The NHS pays a London high-cost area supplement at 20% of basic salary for inner London, 15% for outer London and 5% for fringe areas.

Salaries in private hospitals and private practice vary.

Income figures are intended as a guide only.

Working hours

Working hours are typically Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, although you may do some extra hours in the evening or at weekends. Occasionally, you may work as part of an on-call system covering emergency situations.

What to expect

- Jobs are available in most cities and large towns, with fewer opportunities in rural areas.
- Self-employment or freelance work is possible in private or clinical practice, and for industrial or commercial consultancy.
- The work can be challenging as it involves contact with many different types of people who are often distressed in some way. Occasionally, you might encounter situations of potential personal risk.
- Supervision by colleagues is important throughout your career.
- You'll often need to travel during the working day to visit clients. However, you're unlikely to spend time away from home overnight or work abroad.

Qualifications

You must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to work as a clinical psychologist. This involves completing three years of postgraduate training leading to a Doctorate in clinical psychology, or equivalent, approved by the HCPC.

You'll need Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) to get a place on a Doctorate course, which is achieved by completing a psychology degree or conversion course accredited by The British Psychological Society (BPS) (<https://beta.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist>).

Most Doctorate course providers are looking for a first class honours degree or a good 2:1. Some may accept a low 2:1 or a 2:2 if you have a relevant Masters degree. Check with individual course providers for details of their entry requirements.

Applications for most doctorate courses are made through the Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology (<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/>). However, the University of Hull and Queens University Belfast operate their own admissions process. Applications open during September and close in late November. All training courses are full time and there are no part-time or distance learning options available.

Currently, most places on clinical psychology doctorate courses are funded by the NHS and you'll usually be employed by the NHS as a trainee clinical psychologist. This situation may change, however, so check when applying for a place whether there is funding available. Training includes a combination of academic teaching, clinical experience in a range of clinical settings and the completion of a research project.

You're continuously assessed during the three-year training period and assessment can take various forms, such as practice placement evaluations, essays, clinical case reports, video assignments, project work, online tests and a clinical viva. On successful completion of your Doctorate, you're eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC and chartered status with the BPS.

Skills

You will need have:

- empathy and a person-centred approach to clients
- the ability to recognise your own limitations and respond to difficult situations
- the ability to apply your knowledge of academic psychology and research to clinical problems
- the capacity to be critical and analytical and to work in a self-motivated, independent way
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills in order to deal with people in distress
- the ability to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines
- the determination to succeed
- a strong understanding of the profession and the role of a clinical psychologist, and an awareness of current NHS issues.

A driving licence is usually required for local travel.

Work experience

Some courses require you to have a minimum of 12 months' relevant experience to get a place on a Doctorate course. Most course providers have specific requirements on the amount of experience they want or give advice on how to go about gaining the necessary experience.

Some course providers are particularly keen on experience gained as an assistant psychologist in an NHS clinical psychology department, and competition for these posts is particularly fierce.

Experience as a research assistant in a branch of psychology is also valuable, particularly if the research is clinically oriented. It's helpful to have a good balance of experience in both academic and clinical areas.

Voluntary or paid work in other areas such as nursing, social work, care work, mental health work or services for individuals with disabilities is also relevant.

Employers

Most clinical psychologists are employed by the NHS. Opportunities are available in a range of health and social care settings, including:

- hospitals
- psychiatric units
- local clinics and health centres
- community mental health teams
- child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- social services
- schools and universities
- prisons
- Improving Access to Psychology Therapy (IAPT) services.

There are also opportunities to work on a self-employed basis and in private practice.

Look for job vacancies at:

- Health Service Journal (<https://www.hsj.co.uk/>)
- Jobs in Psychology (<https://www.jobsinpsychology.co.uk/>)
- Mental Health Jobs (<http://www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk/>)
- NHS Jobs (<http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>)
- NHS Scotland Recruitment (<https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>)

Some specialist recruitment agencies handle vacancies.

Clinical psychologist jobs

(/graduate-jobs/clinical-and-ancient-psychology-programme-participant-2673411)

View more healthcare jobs (/graduate-jobs-results?sortBy=dp&careers=174)

Professional development

Once qualified, you must keep your skills up to date and follow the ongoing developments in research. Continuing professional development (CPD) is an essential part of continued registration with the HCPC and chartered membership of the BPS and should include a mixture of directed and self-directed activities.

Activities can include attending conferences, workshops and events, taking post-qualification training courses, writing for journals, and carrying out and presenting research and papers at conferences. You can also undertake personal psychological counselling and reflect on your own practice.

Training and development opportunities are available through the BPS Professional Development Centre (<https://beta.bps.org.uk/psychologists/professional-development>). You can also take further research at PhD level.

If you have an area of specialty, such as forensic clinical psychology, you must work a minimum of ten days per year in this area.

Career prospects

There is a structured career path within the NHS and your career prospects are generally good. You should be able to progress through the pay bands as you gain experience and move into new roles.

You may choose to specialise in a particular area of clinical psychology such as:

- addiction
- clinical health psychology
- forensic clinical psychology
- oncology and palliative care
- psychosis and complex mental health.

You'll usually need a minimum of six years' experience to be eligible to apply for consultant-level positions. From here, there is a small number of heads of specialty posts available (in areas such as adult mental health) with progression to overall head of a psychology service.

With experience, you may choose to move into clinical academic research and teaching. There are also opportunities to train as a high intensity therapist, providing cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to patients with complex issues related to anxiety and depression.



(<http://agcas.org.uk/>)

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October 2017

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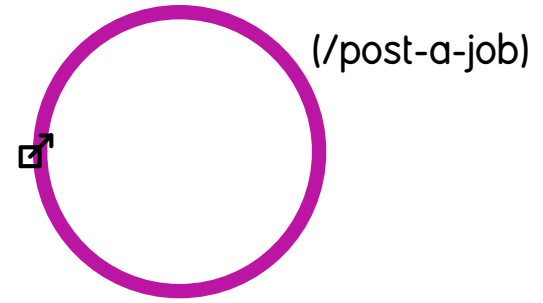


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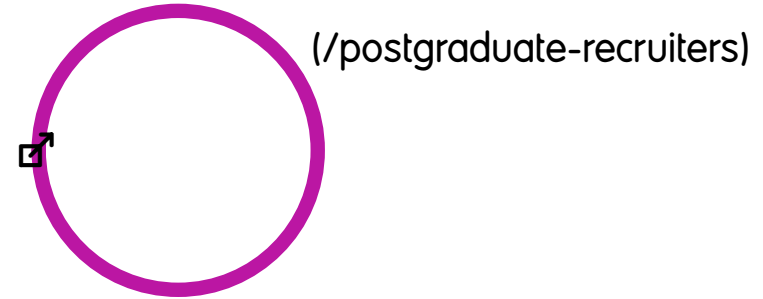
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