

Clinical psychologist

Join the team and make a difference

Clinical psychologists are concerned with people whose thought patterns and behaviour have become a threat to their own and others' well-being. They diagnose, assess and provide treatment for people with a wide range of conditions such as depression, eating disorders and addiction.

(See also *non-clinical psychologists* factsheet)



What will you do?

Psychology is the study of how people think and behave – a combination of science and practice. In interviews, using direct observation and techniques such as psychometric testing, you will make an assessment of a client's problem. Treatment requires the co-operation of the client and you will work in partnership with them to treat and manage the condition. This will usually take place over a series of sessions. You will also liaise with doctors, members of community mental healthcare teams and

other agencies such as the Probation Service and social services.

You could be working with children who have behavioural difficulties, mothers with postnatal depression, young offenders – people of all ages presenting a wide range of challenges. In every case you will be applying your skills and drawing on your scientific knowledge to bring about change for the better. Advances in knowledge and

Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
<p>You are likely to work in some or all of the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in hospitals • in local clinics and health centres • in community mental health teams • in social services, schools and prisons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a thorough knowledge of psychological theory and practice • an interest in how people think and behave • the ability to relate to a wide range of people – clients and colleagues • a patient, sympathetic approach • the ability to work on your own and in consultation with others • a responsible, professional approach

understanding mean that treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy can now be offered to people with much more severe problems and personality disorders than before.

What entry routes are available?

To practise as a clinical psychologist in the NHS you will need to be registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC).

To be eligible to apply for registration you will need to study for an HPC approved postgraduate qualification. Entry onto a postgraduate course usually requires you to have an undergraduate degree in psychology that is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and that leads to Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the BPS. There are some courses which lead to GBC without being BPS approved. The postgraduate training programme leading to a doctorate in clinical psychology and HPC registration normally takes three years and combines work with study.

There are opportunities for psychology graduates to work as assistant psychologists or research assistants supporting clinical psychology teams. These roles will give you more exposure to the work of clinical psychologists, and the experience will be useful if you apply for a postgraduate course.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in the allied health professions, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at www.jobs.nhs.uk

How can you develop your career?

As your clinical experience and knowledge grows you may specialise in a particular area of work, such as offending or addictive behaviour, and move into more senior positions: for example, heading a clinical psychology service. Clinical psychology relies heavily on research to add to the evidence base of practice. You will be able to contribute to this development of the profession through research work and teaching.

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation, as part of the Career Framework. For more information about this initiative please see the *Careers in the allied health professions* booklet.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in the allied health professions except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: clinical psychologist trainee (Band 6); clinical psychologist (Band 7); clinical psychologist principal (Band 8a). To find out more about pay bands, and to see the most up-to-date salary information, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in the allied health professions, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For more information on the professional bodies relevant to the allied health professions, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts