

# Psychotherapist

Join the team and make a difference

Psychotherapy covers a wide range of techniques to tackle mental and physical health problems. While the thinking behind each method varies, they share an emphasis on talking between the therapist and client. Within the NHS, there are designated posts for child psychotherapists.

## What will you do?

As a **child psychotherapist** you will work with children and their families to help tackle problems such as eating disorders, aggressive behaviour, depression and the fall-out from family breakdown. The treatment usually begins with assessment over a number of sessions of interaction between you and the child. These could be one or two detailed interviews or a series of shorter discussions. As well as talking, you might use toys and play to help children express their feelings and emotions. You will also talk to parents and families, and consult with other health professionals involved in the child's care.



Once you have assessed a problem, you will aim to resolve it through further discussions with the child and family. You might also include group sessions if you think they will be of benefit. No special equipment or facilities are needed. The therapy develops through the relationship with the client: using your specialist knowledge and skills to help children come to terms with their thoughts and feelings.

Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
<p>You are likely to work in one or more of the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hospitals</li> <li>• local clinics and health centres</li> <li>• in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a keen awareness of people and their behaviour</li> <li>• a capacity for study and continued learning</li> <li>• the ability to relate to a wide range of people</li> <li>• excellent communication skills</li> <li>• the ability to work on your own as well as in consultation with others</li> <li>• a responsible, professional approach, respecting the confidentiality of clients</li> </ul>

### What entry routes are available?

To practise as a child psychotherapist in the NHS you will need to undertake appropriate recognised training.

Employers advertising job vacancies for child psychotherapists indicate through the job description/person specification exactly which qualifications they will consider when selecting applicants.

To join a course you will usually need a degree and experience in a relevant field such as education, social work, medicine, mental health or psychology. Competition for the limited number of training places is intense.

Training usually takes four years, combining study with clinical training under supervision.

### How can you develop your career?

As your professional experience and knowledge grows you can move into more senior positions within child psychotherapy services. The profession is strongly evidence-based and there are opportunities to conduct research and become involved in teaching to help in its development.

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: psychotherapist trainee (Band 6); psychotherapist (Band 7); psychotherapist 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](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)



**For more information on the range of opportunities available in the allied health professions, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://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](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)**

**To find out more about careers in the allied health professions, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://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](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)**