

TRAINEE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

GENERIC JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a generic job description provided as a guide to applicants for clinical psychology training. Actual Trainee Clinical Psychologist job descriptions may differ from this. Please check with individual clinical psychology course centres and/or the relevant NHS organisation for more information.

JOB SUMMARY

Job Title: Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Accountable to: Director of Clinical Psychology Training Programme or equivalent

Locality: Variable, dependent on current placement

Base: Clinical Psychology Training Programme Base

Termination: Normally after three years. Registration for the Doctor of Clinical Psychology is a condition of continuation in post.

Purpose of the job

- 1 To undertake and meet the requirements of a structured programme of learning including personal study, academic work, research, clinical experience and assessment leading to the award of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.
- 2 To undertake and evaluate specialised psychological assessments, treatments and other types of clinical intervention with individual clients, carers, families, groups of clients etc; staff training; research and development activity.
- 3 To work independently on a day-to-day basis under supervision and subject to review at regular intervals, in accordance with Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) and British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines; supervision will usually be offered by a qualified clinical psychologist (although other qualified healthcare professionals may also contribute).

Communication and working relationships

Trainees will develop working relationships with their Programme Team and their university tutors, who generally remain constant throughout their training. These relationships encompass all facets of their training. In addition trainees will develop circumscribed supervisory relationships with a number of service-based clinical and research supervisors who each hold responsibility for supervision of specific aspects of their clinical and/or research work.

Most challenging part of the job

Throughout their clinical psychology training, trainees will need to develop accurate self-awareness about their current knowledge and skills and use this to determine their own learning needs. The generic nature of training is such that trainees will address these issues in multiple organisational and professional contexts and in respect of several client groups. The capacity to manage academic, research and clinical demands whilst developing as a reflective practitioner is a challenging aspect of the role.

General description of the job

- 1 Works within a broad range of health and social care settings alongside other professionals and agencies including within multi-disciplinary teams and specialised clinical settings.
- 2 Carries out complex psychological assessments sensitively and independently with a broad range of client groups including individual psychometric testing sessions.
- 3 Formulates the nature, causes and maintaining factors of highly distressing psychological difficulties and presentations informed by a broad range of potentially conflicting clinical, theoretical and conceptual models, the empirical, experimental and clinical literature base and the results of assessment. Communicates such formulations professionally, sensitively and diplomatically frequently in an emotive atmosphere to clients, relatives, carers and other healthcare professionals relevant to the case.
- 4 Plans and implements individualised formulation-driven psychological interventions or programmes empathically, sensitively and independently, with a broad range of client groups, carers (including relatives), families, groups of clients etc and evaluates the impact of such interventions.
- 5 Plans and delivers group sessions for clients or their carers.
- 6 Provides advice and support for carers and other professionals.
- 7 Networks and consults with relevant external agencies such as social services, independent and voluntary sector, to facilitate and enable intervention at multiple levels.
- 8 Plans and provides formal and informal training to other psychologists, other professionals, and carers, including the presentation of complex and sometimes contentious psychological and research material.
- 9 Formal and informal research and development activities designed to inform service development are a major feature of the work, culminating in the award of a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Disseminates research findings from own Doctorate, including journal publication and conference presentation.
- 10 Special emphasis is placed on personal and professional development activity such as weekly clinical supervision, shadowing, joint working, personal study and reflection. Work is managed and goals agreed and reviewed at intervals; works independently on a day-to-day basis.
- 11 Attends formal teaching and training sessions provided by the University programme and completes assessment and evaluation procedures as required by the programme.
- 12 Brings to bear a greater level of knowledge, training and experience on clinical activity than the assistant psychologist.
- 13 Is required to travel to placements across a large geographical area and visits a range of settings on placement, including home visits; ability to drive is desirable.
- 14 Most face-to-face clinical work is sedentary.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clinical

- 1 To undertake structured interviews, psychological assessments (including complex psychometric tests) and observations of individuals and groups.
- 2 To assist in the development of psychological formulations of clinical problems and the development and delivery of care plans, which include psychological treatment and/or management of clients' problems.
- 3 To determine appropriate psychological intervention, taking into account a range of potentially conflicting clinical information and dynamics.
- 4 To carry out psychological and psychometric tests accurately, and to develop interview and observation skills, to assess needs and eligibility for services.
- 5 To design, implement and modify as appropriate, individualised psychological interventions with clients, carers, families, groups etc.
- 6 To communicate confidential and personal information concerning ability level and psychological needs, obtained through assessments and interventions, to referring agents and to the client themselves, who may have limited understanding and difficulties with acceptance, and where appropriate to relatives and carers.
- 7 To provide advice and clinically-based supervision to carers about care and management of clients' problems.
- 8 To assist in the co-ordination and running of therapeutic groups.
- 9 To provide emotional support for clients, their carers and families.
- 10 To keep appropriate records of work and inform referrers and relevant others through letters or reports.
- 11 To work as a member of a multi-disciplinary team.
- 12 To follow a person-focused and evidence-based approach.
- 13 To work in partnership with service users.
- 14 To work in accordance with national NHS and placement providers' policies and regulations, as well as those of relevant professional and regulatory bodies.
- 15 To work in a variety of settings including the client's own home, in-patient, residential and day centre facilities.
- 16 To work in a highly emotive atmosphere, frequently encountering highly distressing problems and circumstances, and maintain a high degree of professionalism at all times.
- 17 To work in situations where there are barriers to acceptance and possible exposure to aggression.
- 18 To receive regular clinical supervision in accordance with British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines and criteria, University procedures, and Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) requirements.

Research, Audit and Service Evaluation

- 1 To plan, monitor and evaluate own work, using clinical outcomes assessments, small-scale research methodology and statistical procedures.
- 2 To plan and undertake formal Doctoral research, as agreed with the Programme staff.
- 3 To prioritise expenditure from a small research budget.
- 4 To develop an advanced knowledge base and practical skill in the design, implementation and statistical analysis of a wide variety of types of research, which could include quantitative and qualitative, single case, small N and group comparison studies.
- 5 To plan and undertake clinical audits, service evaluations or practice-based research using appropriate methods and statistical procedures, as agreed with the clinical supervisor(s).
- 6 To plan and undertake practice-based research using or developing validated questionnaires, as required.
- 7 To enhance own knowledge of clinical psychology, specific client groups and types of psychological difficulty through reading, literature searches and personal study.
- 8 To comply with the requirements of research governance and evidence-based practice.

Information Systems

- 1 To maintain appropriate records of own work, in electronic and hard copy, in line with placement provider, NHS and Social Care policies alongside professional guidelines.
- 2 To maintain relevant administrative systems of own work, electronic and hard copy, in line with relevant guidelines.
- 3 To submit statistical information, activity and quality data of own work as required by the University programme, placement provider, regional or national bodies, or NHS.
- 4 To wordprocess material relevant to the Doctoral programme (such as essays, case studies, service-related projects, clinical audits and the doctoral thesis) using suitable wordprocessing and spreadsheet software.
- 5 To use information technology as appropriate, within direct clinical work, research and treatment interventions.
- 6 To undertake clerical functions requiring some familiarity with applied psychology, including literature searches, developing and maintaining training packs, information leaflets, inputting data and other tasks necessary for the efficient running of the service and/or training needs.
- 7 To undertake computerised literature searches using major clinical databases such as PsychInfo, Medline and Cochrane, to inform routine clinical work and as preparation for the design of major doctoral research and smaller scale placement-based projects.
- 8 To develop competence in advanced statistical software (such as SPSS) for the analysis of clinical research and research data.

Teaching, Training and Supervision

- 1 In conjunction with supervisors and University Tutors, to plan and prioritise own workload, research, and individual and group sessions.
- 2 To plan and deliver formal training sessions on psychological aspects of healthcare to groups of relatives, care staff and other professional staff.
- 3 To provide practical training and supervision to care staff with respect to planned interventions.
- 4 To assist with providing specialist training to other psychologists, trainees and assistants as appropriate.
- 5 To demonstrate own duties to other graduate psychologists, if required.

Professional

- 1 To follow the advice and policies of the placement provider, including knowledge, awareness of, and compliance with the legal framework relevant to the placement and client group.
- 2 To be familiar with and abide by confidentiality and information handling and storage guidelines of the placement provider, the relevant NHS organisation, and the University.
- 3 To participate in regular developmental reviews with the Programme Director or his/her representative, identifying CPD needs, agreeing objectives, identifying training needs and formulating a personal plan.
- 4 To co-operate in the use of rooms, books, tests and other equipment needed to carry out duties.
- 5 To attend and participate in administrative and service planning meetings, as determined by the clinical supervisor(s).
- 6 To undertake any other duties as requested by the Programme Team, such as participation in trainee and staff selection procedures, or service on programme and national committees.
- 7 To participate in evaluation and monitoring of the Programme and associated placements as required by key stakeholders.
- 8 To practise and conduct themselves in accordance with British Psychological Society (BPS), Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) and University codes of ethics and conduct.

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GENERIC PERSON SPECIFICATION

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| | Criteria | Essential/ Desirable |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Academic Qualifications | First degree in Psychology, or an equivalent qualification, which confers eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the British Psychological Society. | Essential |
| | Evidence from undergraduate and any postgraduate study of a capacity to undertake study at a Doctoral level, as indicated by a good class of degree or its equivalent, or by postgraduate study in a field related to Clinical Psychology. | Essential |
| | Evidence of a high level of proficiency in English language. | Essential |
| Experience | Experience of paid or voluntary work in a clinical, community or clinical-academic setting exposing the person to client groups and service settings directly relevant to clinical psychology. This experience can be gained in a range of contexts including NHS or University settings, the voluntary sector, or organisations affiliated to the NHS. It follows that a variety of pre-training roles would be relevant, including (but not restricted to) Assistant Psychologist, Research Assistant, Graduate Primary Care Worker, Nursing Assistant, and Healthcare Assistant. | Essential |
| | Sufficient relevant clinical/clinical-research experience to familiarise the person with working practices in NHS/UK statutory service-settings. | Essential |
| | Evidence that this experience (as above) engenders realistic expectations of the demands and nature of Clinical Psychology training. | Essential |
| | Evidence that this experience (as above) has developed an awareness of the contexts in which Clinical Psychology services are usually delivered. | Essential |
| | Evidence that this experience includes building and sustaining relationships with service users in relevant organisational contexts. | Desirable |
| | Evidence of learning from supervision of clinical practice. | Desirable |
| | Evidence of a capacity to undertake research at a postgraduate level. | Desirable |
| Skills/Abilities | Knowledge: Specialist knowledge of clinical psychology acquired through relevant prior experience, undergraduate teaching and/or clinically supervised practice, and the potential to build upon and extend such knowledge through training. | Essential |

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| Skills/Abilities (continued) | <p>Research: A foundation of undergraduate-level knowledge of research design and methodology.</p> <p>Knowledge of basic statistical procedures employed within the field of psychology (including multivariate data analysis).</p> | Essential |
| | | Desirable |
| | <p>Analytical/capacity for formulation: Evidence of potential to formulate and articulate sound judgements based on analysis and interpretation of a range of complex information in clinical work, drawing both on clinical observation and on relevant theoretical models.</p> | Essential |
| | <p>Information Technology: Familiarity with computer use which may include wordprocessing, spreadsheets, database programmes, Publisher and PowerPoint.</p> | Essential |
| | <p>Physical: Capacity to frequently sit in constrained positions for client assessments, group and individual therapy and counselling sessions and clinical supervision.*</p> | Essential |
| | <p>Communication: Effective communication skills, both orally and in written format.*</p> <p>Evidence of potential to communicate complex, technical and clinically sensitive information to individuals with whom clinical psychologists usually work. This includes both psychologists and fellow professionals, as well as individual clients and their relatives/carers.</p> <p>Evidence of potential to tailor communication in a manner which is congruent with the needs of the recipient, including the needs of clients with a range of emotional difficulties, or who have difficulty in communicating or understanding.</p> <p>Evidence of potential to exercise both appropriate assertion and diplomacy according to the particular situation, with professional colleagues, carers, relatives, and clients with a range of challenging emotional difficulties (including hostility).</p> <p>Evidence of potential for good presentation skills suited to both formal and informal settings.*</p> | Essential Essential Essential Essential Essential |
| | <p>Planning: Evidence of organisational potential which enables planning of own workload in relation both to clinical work (eg organise appointments with staff and clients, plan client sessions) as well as academic work (eg teaching and research activities).</p> <p>Evidence of a potential for flexibility in planning: specifically a capacity to monitor, evaluate and adjust plans accordingly over time.</p> | Essential Essential |
| Personal | <p>Evidence of ability to form empathic relations with a wide range of clients in a variety of settings.</p> <p>Evidence of an ability to form good and respectful professional working relationships with a wide range of professional colleagues.</p> | Essential Essential |

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| Personal (continued) | Evidence of a capacity to reflect constructively on all aspects of own performance (academic, clinical and professional). | Essential |
| | Evidence of a capacity to reflect realistically on their own strengths and weaknesses. | Essential |
| | Evidence of receptiveness to academic feedback and clinical supervision, and to apply ideas and knowledge gained from this feedback to current and novel contexts. | Essential |
| | Evidence of values consistent with the NHS Constitution. | Essential |
| | Evidence of a belief in the possibility of psychological change. | Essential |
| | Evidence of respect for fairness and diversity. | Essential |
| | Capacity for frequent extended periods of intense concentration in a range of clinical contexts (eg individual/group therapy, clinical assessments/interviews, clinical supervision) which require active participation which takes account of dynamic processes, and where planning of appropriate responses to these dynamic processes is required. | Essential |
| | Potential to work effectively under pressure, including working directly with staff and clients who may be highly distressed, analyse data where there may be frequent interruptions, prioritise work, operate a waiting list, meet short deadlines and function within an unpredictable work pattern which requires regular revision of plans. | Essential |
| | Ability, with appropriate support, to undertake psychological assessment and therapy in an emotionally demanding environment, with frequent exposure to highly distressing or highly emotional circumstances, including situations where sexual abuse, family violence and breakdown, mental illness or terminal ill health may be the focus of psychological intervention. | Essential |
| | Ability to function well in the context of unexpected or uncertain outcome, or in the absence of guidelines or in novel situations, and to contain anxiety and distress on behalf of others, including other staff within the organisation. | Desirable |
| Evidence of potential ability to work as a lone worker in circumstances where there may be exposure to severe distress, verbal or physical aggression. | Desirable | |
| Evidence of potential ability to work effectively whilst exposed to unpleasant working conditions including frequent exposure to verbal aggression and occasional exposure to physical aggression. | Desirable | |
| Practical | Ability and willingness to travel across the training region.* | Essential |
| | Current driving licence and car/motorcycle owner.* | Essential |
| | Satisfactory Enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service | Essential |
| | Satisfactory Work Health Assessment | Essential |

* After any reasonable adjustments to compensate for disability, including adjustments required to comply with the Equality Act.