IT CAN BE A TOUGH CAREER DEALING WITH CRIME, BUT IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND AND HELP OFFENDERS, FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY COULD BE FOR YOU.

As a Forensic Psychologist you will apply psychological theory to criminal investigations, understand the psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour and treat people who have committed offences. Forensic Psychologists work with every element of the justice system – from the psychological aspects of the criminal investigation and legal processes, to using psychological methods to understand criminal behaviour, reduce its impact and minimise reoffending.

Forensic Psychologists working with the public are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and you must register with them in order to use the protected title.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS WORK IN THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS IN A RANGE OF AREAS INCLUDING:

- SEXUAL OFFENDING
- VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION
- ILLICIT DRUG AND OR ALCOHOL USE
WHERE COULD I WORK?

The largest single employer of Forensic Psychologists in the UK is

HM PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE

They’re also employed by:

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
PRIVATE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS
SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS (SUCH AS ‘SECURE HOSPITALS’)
SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFENDER MANAGEMENT SERVICES (SUCH AS THE POLICE AND PROBATION SERVICE)
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS – TEACHING, SUPERVISING AND RESEARCHING

WHO COULD I WORK WITH?

As a Forensic Psychologist you’ll work with a range of people, including those who have chronic mental health conditions or behavioural problems likely to lead them to offend, families of those who have offended and the victims of crime. Some specialist Forensic Psychologists work with young people and within the youth justice system.

Forensic Psychologists may work directly with individuals or groups, support other forensic professionals, or work in areas such as the courts, security and the police force or other law-enforcement agencies.
TRAINING TO BECOME CHARTERED IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

You can gain Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC) by completing a BPS-accredited undergraduate degree or conversion course.

**MSC IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY AND**

**BPS QUALIFICATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY (STAGE 2) OR**

**DOCTORATE IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is the best possible way to learn about a career in psychology and decide whether it’s what you want. You’ll also need it to get a place on most accredited postgraduate courses, and to find work in the field. Some postgraduate courses are looking for specific types of work experience so you’ll need to contact the universities for further information.

If you are looking for work experience you could consider the following areas:

**ASSISTANT FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST**

**WORKING IN A SECURE UNIT**

**VOLUNTEERING WITH VICTIM SUPPORT**

**INTERVENTION FACILITATOR WITH THE PRISON SERVICE**

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

CAREERS.BPS.ORG.UK/AREA/FORENSIC
SAMANTHA CHAN
TRAINEE FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

There’s no such thing as a typical day in forensic psychology – my working week is extremely varied. I might attend ward round meetings, deliver individual or group psychological interventions, attend psychology service meetings, facilitate reflective practice sessions, deliver staff training, facilitate team formulation meetings, write reports, carry out research or clinical audits, observe qualified staff, attend training or professional network meetings... the list is endless!

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB
Being a small part of helping service users to overcome personal difficulties, and having the opportunity to work with a wide range of professionals from varied disciplines.

THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF MY JOB
It’s difficult to balance competing demands and you have to become quite skilled at organisation and time management. At times it can be emotionally demanding so it’s important to utilise clinical supervision and reflective practice.

WHY I LOVE MY JOB
It’s challenging and has allowed me to develop professionally and personally. I have the opportunity to work with people from all walks of life, and feel that I contribute to making a difference to society by working to rehabilitate service users and reduce reoffending.

ADVICE TO OTHERS
Don’t become disheartened by the length of training and think about all the learning and experience you have to gain – I wouldn’t be the professional or person I am today without having these experiences.

Look for job roles that will provide you with a breadth of experience – I completed a number of different roles before becoming a Trainee Forensic Psychologist including Mental Health Support Worker, Therapy Assistant and Prison Link Worker.