Careers in Clinical Psychology

Dr Alexander Margetts, Clinical Psychologist
Michelle Pratt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Psychological Medicine Unit,
South Kensington & Chelsea Mental Health Centre

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Careers in Clinical Psychology

- Who we are, and our journeys here
- What do clinical psychologists do?
  - Client groups
  - Work settings
- How do I become a clinical psychologist?
  - Entry requirements
  - Application process
  - Training
  - Qualified life
Clinical psychologists work to reduce psychological distress and promote good mental health by drawing upon psychology theories to work on cognitive, behavioural and emotional processes of change within an understanding of the person’s physical health, social and cultural context.
Theoretical approaches

- Cognitive-behavioural therapy
- Systemic psychotherapy
- Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic therapy

Psychological assessment

Clinical psychologists use a variety of assessment tools and psychological models:

- Clinical interview
- Standardised questionnaires
- Psychometric tests, including neuropsychological assessment
- Behavioural observation
- Self report
- Information from significant others
Formulation

• A formulation provides a hypothesis about a person’s difficulties which draws upon psychological theory.
• Formulations can be drawn from the different therapeutic perspectives e.g. cognitive, behavioural, systemic, psychodynamic.
• Formulation helps shape understanding of a client’s difficulties and leads to treatment/intervention plans.
Client groups

- Adults
- Children and young people
- Learning disability
- Older adults
- Health
  (e.g. pain, burns, obesity, HIV, oncology)
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Neuropsychology
  (e.g. head injury, stroke, dementias)
Settings

- General hospitals
- Psychiatric units
- GP practices
- Forensic units
- Residential care homes
- Community mental health teams
What makes a good clinical psychologist?
Route to becoming a clinical psychologist

5 main stages becoming a clinical psychologist

1. Undergraduate Degree…
2. Gain Experience…
3. Apply to the Doctorate…
4. Complete the Doctorate…
5. Qualified to practice.

Time takes can vary: average age qual. ≈ 30yrs
Route to becoming a clinical psychologist in the UK

1. **Undergraduate Degree**…
2. Gain Experience…
3. Apply to the Doctorate…
4. Complete the Doctorate…
5. Qualified to practice.
Stage 1: Undergraduate Degree

- At secondary school get GCSEs, and then A-levels. Can take A-level Psychology, but not a requirement for undergraduate degree entry. Undergraduate courses vary in A-level grades required (normally CCC-AAA), can apply to up to 5 different Uni’s through UCAS.
- Complete 3-4 year BSc or BA undergraduate degree in Psychology, accredited by the BPS (British Psychological Society). Very specific degree module requirements. Aim for a 2.i (60-69%) or 1\textsuperscript{st} class (70%+) honours (the higher the better)
- For some their psychology degree may be a conversion degree or 2\textsuperscript{nd} degree and career change.
Route to becoming a clinical psychologist in the UK

1. Undergraduate Degree…
2. **Gain Experience**…
3. Apply to the Doctorate…
4. Complete the Doctorate…
5. Qualified to practice.
Stage 2: Gain Experience

• **Academic**: Consider Masters in relevant topic, especially if got a 2.2 or ‘low’ 2.1 degree

• **Clinical**: can include volunteering in relevant area (e.g. mental health phone helpline), paid personal care with relevant populations, and highly prized ‘Assistant Psychologist’ posts (e.g. 300:1 applications!).

• **Research**: research assistant post, or as part of Masters, or within an assistant psychologist post.
Route to becoming a clinical psychologist in the UK

1. Undergraduate Degree…
2. Gain Experience…
3. **Apply to the Doctorate**…
4. Complete the Doctorate…
5. Qualified to practice.
Stage 3: Apply to the Doctorate

- Doctorate offered at 30 Universities (594 places: 16% applicants successful), approved by HCPC/BPS, all course fees paid + salary
- **Self-funding** for non-EU students may be possible at some courses (Essex, IoP, Leicster, Newcastle, UCL, Plymouth, Salomons, Teesside, Hertfordshire) – circa £20,000/year, contact courses directly for info
- Variation between course application numbers: ranges 14-41 applicants/place
- Can apply to 4 courses/year (Sept - Dec). Costs £20-£25.
- Centralised application process, ‘Clearing House’.

Fill in 1 form online:
- Academic transcript of undergraduate results
- List of qualifications
- List of experience
- 1 academic reference
- 1 clinical reference
- Short answer statements reflecting on experience and background
No. of places: Applicants = 1: 6-7
Interviews & Offers

• On average each course has about 24 applicants/place
• Courses interview approximately 3 applicants/place
• Interview format varies between courses (March – May).
• May include: exams, vignettes, essays, computer tests, role-play, group-task, presentation, academic interview, research interview, clinical interview…
• Receive interview results direct from course. Either:
  – Straight offer
  – Reserve list
  – Rejection
• Once all courses have interviewed nationwide, then a deadline to accept/reject offers and wait for reserves.
Equal opportunities: ethnicity

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<th>APPLICANTS</th>
<th>ACCEPTANCES</th>
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<td>'White'</td>
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<tr>
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Equal opportunities: age

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<th>Age</th>
<th>APPLICANTS</th>
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<td>20-24 yrs</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>25-29 yrs</td>
<td>1668</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td>30-34 yrs</td>
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<td>35-39 yrs</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>40-44 yrs</td>
<td>108</td>
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<td>45-49 yrs</td>
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<td>50+ yrs</td>
<td>20</td>
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**Equal opportunities: gender**

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<td>Female</td>
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<td>500</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>83</td>
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**Equal opportunities: disability**

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<td>‘No disability’</td>
<td>3280</td>
<td>583</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Disabled’</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>38</td>
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Route to becoming a clinical psychologist in the UK

1. Undergraduate Degree…
2. Gain Experience…
3. Apply to the Doctorate…
4. **Complete the Doctorate**…
5. Qualified to practice.
Stage 4: Complete the Doctorate

- Different universities vary the exact structure and content of doctorate, but all are designed to meet national accreditation criteria of the BPS (British Psychological Society), and training lasts for 3 years.
- All must cover academic, research and clinical skills.
- All operate on ‘Reflective-Scientist-Practitioner’ model
- Some courses known for different clinical focus but all courses have to teach range of approaches (e.g. CBT, systemic, psychodynamic, neuropsychology, narrative)
- Some courses viewed as more research focused
- Funded by NHS: local University fees paid and salary.
- Title of ‘Trainee Clinical Psychologist’ during training
RHUL Doctorate

- **Working week:**
  - Varies depending on year of training
  - More research days and less teaching as you go through training.
  - Always 3 or 4 days a week clinical, and rest of time either lectures or research (only 1 day teaching weekly in Yr 3, Sept-Dec)

- **Academic work:**
  - 4 × 4,000 word case reports
  - 1 × 4,000 word service related research project
  - 1 × 4,000 Research Design Analysis
  - 1 × 25,000 – 30,000 word thesis and pass viva
  - Passout interview and WAIS and WISC assessments (Year 1)
  - 3 exams (2 first year, 1 (stats open book) second year): short answers and essays

- **Clinical work:**
  - Usually 4 x 6 month placement and 1 x year placement (Year 1).
  - Need to gain competencies e.g. adult mental health, child and family, older adults, learning disabilities but do not necessarily have to complete all types of placement
  - Third year specialist placements if competencies met
Oxford Doctorate (in 2005!)

- **Working week:**
  - Term time: 1 day lectures, 1 day research, 3 days clinical
  - Outside term time: 1 day research, 4 days clinical

- **Academic work:**
  - 5 × clinical placement logs
  - 5 × 4,000 word case reports
  - 5 × 5,000 word academic essays
  - 1 × 4,500 word service related research project
  - 1 × 25,000 word thesis and pass viva

- **Clinical work:**
  - 4 × 6 month ‘core placements’: adult mental health, child and family, older adults, learning disabilities
  - Elective(s) in final year. Any core topic or a specialty: clinical health, neuropsych, addictions, forensics, child protection…
Q. When is a PhD not a PhD?

- **A. When it’s a D. Clin. Psy.!**

  - With the ‘D. Clin. Psy.’ (Doctorate in Clinical Psychology) you are able to apply to the Health Professions Council for license to practice anywhere in the UK (≈4000 Clinical Psychologists in UK)
  - A PhD in Psychology is purely academic or research based, and you would not be able to practice clinically with it.
  - Can do research with D. Clin. Psy. (in theory ½ day a week) but generally research skill/time neglected due to high clinical case load
  - Exceptions are clinical psychologists in ‘centers of excellence’ where research is valued, and on training courses by teaching staff.
  - Majority of clinicians ‘in the field’ however do not, and when they do it is often local service related (e.g. evaluation of groups run, audits).
Route to becoming a clinical psychologist in the UK

1. Undergraduate Degree…
2. Gain Experience…
3. Apply to the Doctorate…
4. Complete the Doctorate…
5. Qualified to practice.
Stage 5: Qualified to practice

- Most apply for clinical psychology posts in NHS.
- Jobs in all areas of clinical psychology: e.g. adult, child and family, neuro, addictions, forensic, health, older adults, learning disability…
- Employed on different ‘bands’. 37.5hr working week (in theory!)
- As ↑ career, ↑ supervision, consultancy, and management roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Band 2-3</td>
<td>£14.3K - £19.3K</td>
<td>Healthcare Assistant/Support worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 4</td>
<td>£18.8K - £22.0K</td>
<td>Assistant Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td>£21.4K - £27.9K</td>
<td>Assistant Psychologist – Higher level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6</td>
<td>£25.8K - £34.5K</td>
<td>Trainee Clinical Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 7</td>
<td>£30.8K - £40.6K</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Clinical Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 8a-8b</td>
<td>£39.2K - £56.5K</td>
<td>Principal Clinical Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 8c-8d</td>
<td>£55.0K - £81.6K</td>
<td>Consultant Clinical Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 9</td>
<td>£77.9K - £98.5K</td>
<td>Head of Psychological Services</td>
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</table>
1. **Lack of diversity** within profession (predominately white, middle class females): need to recruit at ‘grass-root’ level (encourage men and ethnic diversity at UG)

2. **Proving effectiveness** and worth: ‘payment by results’, use of standardised outcome measures for all clients

3. **Long waiting lists** to see a Clinical Psychologist: recent move to improve provision (Layard report: IAPT) led to ‘low intensity’ (telephone support, guided self-help) and ‘high intensity’ (face-to-face, therapy) workforces in primary care settings (and beyond…)

4. Population demographics shift: **people living longer**

5. ‘Negative’ **lifestyle behaviours**: chronic health prob’s

6. Changes to structure and funding in the **NHS reform**
Enjoy the journey
Some useful references

- http://www.clinpsy.org.uk/
- http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/
- http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/