



## SPRING 2022 LONDON PPN NEWSLETTER

### Celebrating the launch of CAMHS CAP Programme at Royal Holloway, University of London!

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan and Community Mental Health Framework, the implementation of new roles is high on the agenda. In a previous newsletter we covered the Clinical Associate Psychologist (CAP) roles in Community Teams, and are delighted to focus here on the introduction of other CAPs in the London region. PPN London has been talking with Royal Holloway, University of London, who is the first within the London region to establish a CAP Apprenticeship Masters programme specialised for Children and Young People (CYP). We spoke with Professor Helen Pote, who developed the programme, and Dr Chris Marshall who leads the course.



**A joint interview with:**

**Professor Helen Pote, Clinical Director & Deputy Programme Director of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Higher Educational Institutions & Training Rep on the PPN**

**Dr Chris Marshall, Course Director for CAPs Programme, Clinical Tutor for DClinPsy, Principal Clinical Psychologist CAMHS West London NHS Trust**

### **What is the CAMHS CAP?**

**Helen** – A CAP is a new psychological profession that is run nationally. There are currently 250 CAPs nationally, but only a few of them have qualified. It is a role that delivers and supports assessments and psychological interventions and it fits between an assistant psychologist and a qualified clinical psychologist. The CAP course mitigates an issue commonly found for assistant psychologists, which is the expectation to complete psychological tasks without having additional training to support the role. The role is established for the benefit of the local communities and Trusts and it is an enduring role, rather than a stepping stone for other training such as IAPT or clinical psychology doctoral training. The programme was developed under the regulation of the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education which outlines 12 duties for CAPs. These duties are very broad, involving assessments, interventions and consultations but are different from other applied psychological professions, as a CAP will be specialised for one population: this programme is focused solely on children, young people and families.

### **How is the CAMHS CAP programme structured in Royal Holloway?**

**Chris** – We structured the programme so that the apprentices obtain on-the-job and off-the-job training. Off-the-job training takes place two days a week during term time for apprentices to attend university. This is mixed between in-person and virtual teaching across six different modules. The modules range from professional clinical practice, assessment and formulation, psychological interventions, applied research methods, clinical placement and the end point assessment. These were chosen in accordance with the needs of the local Trusts, with whom we collaborated to identify what clinical roles they wanted the apprentices to get involved in. As well as clinically focussed training, many of the Trusts involved with the programme have emphasised quality improvement and trying to promote this change through action research.

On-the-job training comprises clinical work in the Trusts. CAPs have a set number of hours to undertake clinical work that matches with each module that is taught. During out of term time, the students may spend time with their host services and/or conduct independent study.

### **Why was CYP chosen as the specialisation for the CAPs programme?**

**Helen** – Royal Holloway collaborated with local Trusts to identify any training gaps. CYP was identified as an area within the London region where there was a need for this training. Within Royal Holloway, we have clinical psychologists working within the clinical psychology doctoral programme, who specialise in child psychology, as well as having experienced developmental psychologists within our undergraduate psychology department. Having this expertise and identifying this gap within the local psychological workforce, we felt that it was best to focus on a CYP programme to support the local Trusts.

### **How do you think the CAP role benefits CYP?**

**Chris** – There are large growing mental health support teams within CAMHS across London. They are made up of child wellbeing practitioners, education mental health practitioners in one section of applied psychology, and then we have other professions with core training, such as the clinical psychologists. CAPs can fill the gap between those who have very specific training focused on children, young people and families, and those who offer assessments, formulation and interventions. They are able to support teams providing services in Tier 2 (early help and targeted services) and Tier 3 (more specialist/complex care). In order to meet the current recruitment challenges for expanding services, the CAP programme has allowed local Trusts to 'grow their own' staff through the CAPs training. Trusts are keen to invest, support and nurture the apprentices so that when they become qualified, there will be jobs ready for them within the Trust. Having this growing workforce will in turn support these mental health services and improve access to them for young people and families.

**Helen** – There is also the hope that the CAP role can help promote diversity in the workforce. If CAP practitioners are coming from the local Trust communities, which they are supporting, they will be able to better understand their needs and more effectively address them. The selection of the CAP apprentices is also made by the Trust. This gives them the opportunity and flexibility to select their workforce in line

with their local needs. It's also not only about recruitment but also retention which is another key area for workforce sustainability.

### **What other gaps in child services can CAP help fill?**

**Helen** – It is important to be realistic about what gaps they are filling within the service. A CAP is not filling the role of a qualified clinical psychologist. A CAP may support interventions rather than delivering therapy themselves. Or they might be providing assessments and feeding that back to the multidisciplinary team discussion rather than completing an assessment entirely independently. However, the CAP role has a large breadth of duties that they can get involved in. Many of our CAP apprentices are working in CAMHS but one of our CAPs is working in an education setting and having to link with schools within a borough, another CAP is working within a child development service. Though it is quite a prescribed area of work, their job role will span across different assessments, interventions, research and consultations.

### **How would you like to see this programme develop overtime?**

**Helen** – With the first cohort having only just started in February this year, the priority for the programme is to ensure that there is quality in every aspect. We have 18 months to make sure this happens. In 2023 we will review our progress and the ways in which the CAP role has been successful and useful for the Trusts and if it has been helpful we will definitely look to expand the course intake. We currently work with six commissioned Trusts for the first wave of cohorts. However, there are plans for other Trusts to get involved in the future.

### **Has there been any feedback from the apprentices?**

**Chris** – There are 17 CAPs who have started the 18 month course. I have been involved with a lot of the teaching this term and they have shown enthusiasm and curiosity in relation to this role. They really value the opportunities in their on-the-job training, to meet with their supervisors and young people and then be able to come back into teaching with this experience, asking questions and having engaging discussions.

### **Is there any advice you can provide to any potential future CAP applicants?**

**Helen** – It is important to note that the apprentices are selected by the Trusts. The role is for those who can juggle academic work, clinical learning and research. It takes someone who is energetic and dedicated to manage that. For the Trusts, they will select apprentices who can balance those skills and who are keen to learn.



**Chris** – Don't be put off if you feel that you don't have enough knowledge and experience in the area. Selection tends to prioritise an applicant's potential and competency. There was a case where an undergraduate who finished in September was selected for this programme, which only started this February. There are others who only have three to four months of clinical experience. Even though hopeful applicants may not yet have clinical experience, Trusts will be looking for the ways in which they show key decision making and clinical thinking skills in other areas of their life. Give it a go! See the CAP apprentices and team below:



More information about the CAP apprenticeship role can be found [here](#).

## Other News from the London PPN

### London Safety in Mental Health Settings Project: Successful Community of Practice Launch Event

The launch event held by the London SiMHS project on Tuesday 8 March was attended by 89 colleagues across London. It focused on sharing learning and developments in trauma-informed approaches and on building their community of practice. There are plans to hold a second Community of Practice for Summer 2022. If you want to know more about the Community of Practice event, the information can be found [here](#).



### PPN London Turns One Event Update

Thank you to all those who joined us in January! We heard from teams and colleagues across London about key themes including: an update on workforce planning; the impact of the pandemic on staff in NHS and other services; developments in Trauma-Informed Care; the Courageous Project of the Women and Girls network, and Children and Young People's mental health. We have reviewed the feedback from participants about what is important to you at this time. Whilst participants were pleased with the range of opportunities that new roles are offering within services, there are a number of issues with staffing that were also highlighted. You told us about the importance of retention of qualified staff at this time in busy services. We will endeavour to work closely with this feedback in onward PPN planning.

### PPN London Pop Ups

The London PPN is hosting pop-up sessions throughout 2022 in order to share updates about what is happening within the London region.

Please join us on:

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022

For regular updates and information about events, follow us on Twitter [@LondonPPN](#)

