

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGIST

As a health psychologist you will use your knowledge of psychology and health to promote general wellbeing and understand physical illness. Health psychologists are specially trained to help people deal with the psychological and emotional aspects of health and illness as well as supporting people who are chronically ill.

Health psychologists promote healthier lifestyles and try to find ways to encourage people to improve their health. For example, they may help people to lose weight or stop smoking. Health psychologists also use their skills to try to improve the healthcare system. For example, they may advise doctors about the best ways to communicate with their patients.

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

## WHO CAN TRAIN FOR THIS ROLE?

- Psychology Graduate

## REQUIRED TRAINING FOR THIS ROLE



Health psychologists will usually have completed an accredited undergraduate degree in psychology. This will be followed by a master's in health psychology, approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Finally, health psychologists complete one of the following HCPC/ British Psychological Society (BPS) 'Stage 2', doctoral-level qualifications: The BPS's qualification in health psychology Stage 2 (QHP Stage 2) or an HCPC/ BPS accredited doctorate in health psychology.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN

### QUALIFICATIONS



Health psychologists will usually have completed an undergraduate degree in psychology accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) to confer the Graduate Basis for Chartered (GBC) Membership (usually 2:1 or higher).

### EXPERIENCE



Useful experience can be through paid or voluntary roles, e.g., shadowing health psychologists working with patients with pain management issues or helping support patients with stroke rehabilitation.

Voluntary or paid work in other areas such as nursing, social work, care work, mental health work or services for individuals with disabilities is also useful. Check with individual institutions for the extent and type of experience they're looking for.

Experience as a research assistant is also relevant and it's helpful to have a good balance of experience in both academic and applied health areas. Getting some experience working under the supervision of a qualified health psychologist within the NHS is also valuable.

At stage 2, health psychology trainees are expected to source their own two-year supervised practice placement.

Excellent interpersonal skills are essential.

### SALARY EXPECTATIONS



Trainee health psychologists are typically paid around £26k pa. Qualified Health Psychologists when employed by NHS services are paid at Band 7 on the NHS Agenda for Change pay scales with other settings paying a similar equivalent amount.

Progression to a higher band or salary requires further specialisation, as well as additional management and leadership responsibilities.



## **FUTURE CAREER OPTIONS**

Health psychologists work across a range of health care and other providers. This can be in a variety of settings including primary, secondary, or tertiary care within the NHS, third sector, and academic organisations. Settings can vary from large-scale public health programmes to individual or small group consultations.

Many health psychologists also work in academia, teaching and researching in their area of expertise.



## **REGISTERING OR ACCREDITING BODY**

In order to practice as a health psychologist, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).



## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION**

Once you qualify, you can apply for chartered status with the British Psychological Society (BPS), and become a full member of the BPS Division of Health Psychology.



## **USEFUL LINKS**

[READ MORE: Health Careers NHS](#)

[READ MORE: Prospects Careers](#)

[READ MORE: The British Psychological Society](#)

[READ MORE: Pay scales - NHS Employers](#)

[READ MORE: NHS Jobs](#)