

# Psychological professions

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There are over 20,000 psychological professionals working in NHS-commissioned healthcare in England.

They deploy a wide range of psychological competences in health and social care which make a difference to individual patients and families and the effective operation of the wider care and treatment system. Many people work in specialist mental health services. This has been expanded recently across primary and acute care and into educational and community services.

## Scope

As well as the emerging new roles of children's wellbeing practitioners and education mental health practitioners, the following 10 roles are included in psychological professions:

1. Clinical Psychologists
2. Cognitive Behavioural Therapists
3. Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners
4. Counsellors
5. Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists
6. Counselling Psychologists
7. Forensic Psychologists
8. Health Psychologists
9. Systemic Family Therapists
10. Adult Psychotherapists.

In addition to the above, the New Roles Task and Finish Group (2019) work also considered broader workforce requirements of the psychological professions. Clinical psychologists are eligible to apply for non-medical approved clinician status and currently make up the largest proportion of this workforce.

A National Psychological Professions Workforce Group has been established to take forward plans for the Workforce Implementation Plan for the Long Term Plan (LTP) and build on the work done by the Psychological Professions New Roles Task and Finish Group. This includes wide representation from HEE, Arm's Length Bodies, professional and user groups.

## Priorities/Recommendations:

- To develop and publish a national Psychological Professions (Workforce) Strategy to enable the delivery of the Long Term Plan.
- Model the full requirement for the existing psychological professions
- Redesign workforce and training models for Adult Common and Severe Mental Health Problems to solve challenges in supply and retention and enable the required further expansion of psychological therapies in these areas
- Establish clear principles for the implementation of additional new roles in the psychological professions (based on clinical need, evidence based).
- Determine whether deploying additional new psychologically-informed roles at graduate or non-graduate entry level could support delivery of the LTP.
- Develop a more integrated and coherent psychological career path with clearer and more efficient routes of entry, progression and lateral development.
- Implement a programme to promote psychological professions careers, and a toolkit for making jobs more attractive, to support recruitment and retention. This includes ensuring all new roles are clearly defined, relate appropriately to existing roles and are appropriately supported, governed and accredited.
- Establish a senior psychological professional to lead on psychological healthcare delivery on every mental health trust board in the system. This may include exploring the potential benefits of a Chief Psychological Professions Officer role.
- Identify how the mental health services data set can be amended to capture consultative or other indirect clinical activity and routine outcome measures for direct psychological professions activity and implement these changes.

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## Links

- [1] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work>
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