

## NHS-funding for psychological professions training programmes FAQs: 2-year psychological professions funding rule policy implementation in England

Updated: 10 November 2022

### The Policy

The Policy: [2-year Psychological Professions Funding Rule](#)

The '2-year psychological professions funding rule' is based on the principle that once an individual has commenced an NHS-funded psychological professions training programme, a 2-year period will be required to pass from the expected completion date of that training before the funded individual would be eligible for further NHS funding to train in another psychological profession training (where this leads to a change of occupation).

Notes:

1. The 2-year timeframe is taken from the date of the qualifying exam board (or the date individual award is formally recommended by chair's action post-exam board) of one course to the start date for teaching of the next course to be undertaken.
2. The rule applies to any individual who starts and subsequently completes, withdraws or fails to complete the qualifying requirements of a training programme.

### FAQs

#### Application of the policy change

##### 1. How will the post-qualification eligibility restrictions be enforced?

Training providers and employers will deliver the policy, and this will be monitored by HEE as commissioner of most of these programmes and NHS Trusts where they commission the programmes that are on the list (including Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner apprenticeships and Clinical Associate in Psychology apprenticeships).

**2. Why are professions on this list even if they are rarely NHS funded or rarely routes to clinical psychology training?**

HEE has included key trainings within the psychological professions professional grouping.

**3. The training course I am on it is not listed as one of the trainings affected. Am I eligible for NHS funding for one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes?**

Yes, you will normally be eligible for funding if you meet the other requirements for funding and entry to one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes. If in doubt, please contact the training provider offering the programme directly to discuss further.

**4. I have done one of these training courses and paid for it myself. Am I eligible for HEE funding for one of the other listed psychological professions trainings?**

Yes, you will normally be eligible for funding if you meet the other requirements for funding and entry to one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes. If in doubt, please contact the training provider offering the programme directly to discuss further.

**5. Will the policy mean that I must remain in the same role or same occupation for two years after my qualification?**

Employers will usually seek assurance of your plans to stay and work in a qualified capacity for a period of time if they take you on as a trainee. This can help consolidate your skills in that role and provide the best possible service for the public.

However, this funding policy does allow you to change roles, occupations, services, or organisations, or to take time out for special leave. The 2-years post-qualification is taken from the date of the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair's action, for the most recent training programme, regardless of what you have done since.

**6. If I qualify and then go on leave due to undertaking parental, maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave, sabbatical, or caring commitments, will I have to make up the time in work before applying for any future NHS-funded psychological professions courses?**

No, you will not need to "make up the time in work" before being eligible for NHS funding for psychological professions training programme. The 2-year timeframe runs from the date of the qualifying exam board (or the post-exam board date that the individual award was formally recommended by Chair's action), of the previous training completed to the start date of any future NHS-funded psychological professions training programme, regardless of what you do between these dates.

However, you will need to meet the eligibility and competency requirements for the training programme you are applying for and receive an offer of a training place from the training provider.

**7. Do you have to be 2-years post qualified from the date you apply, or just by the time you start the course?**

The 2-year timeframe is taken from the date of the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair's action, for the previous NHS-funded psychological professions training programme to the start date of the course for the subsequent training.

**8. Will candidates be able to apply a year into being qualified so that once the course starts it will be 2-years? or will they have to wait for 2-years before applying?**

You can apply for courses as long as the start date for the course is not until at least two years after the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair's action, (of the previous NHS-funded psychological professions training programme).

**9. Why two years as opposed to one?**

Two years is a proportionate limit that balances the need to support career progression options, with the need to ensure the required workforce growth, a fair return on tax-payer investment in your training and create a stable enough workforce to provide the best service to the public.

## Upskilling training questions

**10. Can a psychological professional who has completed one of the NHS-funded courses undertake further psychology modality or upskilling training within the 2-year period?**

The 2-year psychological professions funding policy will always apply when an individual seeks to undertake a second NHS-funded psychological professions training programme, and this would result in a change of occupation from one psychological profession to another.

There are a few exemptions to the 2-year policy, and these include:

- Pre-clinical Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy training
- Supervisor training

An exemption may be applied where undertaking a second NHS-funded psychological professions training from the list of included programmes **does not** result in a change in professional occupation and this second psychological training can therefore be considered 'upskilling'. This means where the new competences can be applied by the practitioner within their existing occupation and national guidelines do not require a change of occupational role to do so.

The 2-year psychological professions funding policy then applies to any second 'upskilling' NHS-funded psychological professions training.

### **Box 1. Example of exemption on the basis of ‘upskilling’**

**Example 1a:** Following completion of a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, a Clinical Psychologist may undertake training at any time in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or Family and Systemic Psychotherapy. Upskilling in these courses does not result in a change of occupation.

### **Box 2. Examples of ‘second upskilling’ application of the 2-year rule**

**Example 1b:** The Clinical Psychologist that completed a first ‘upskilling’ in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, would normally not be eligible for a second ‘upskilling’ training (for example, Family and Systemic Psychotherapy) until 2-years after the date of the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair’s action for the first upskilling training programme.

**Example 2:** A nurse or social worker may undertake training in Family and Systemic Therapy and deliver family therapy within their nurse or social worker role. The individual would then normally not be eligible for a second NHS-funded psychological professions training (for example, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) until the 2-year period has passed from the date of the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair’s action, of the first ‘upskilling’ training.

### **11. If I enrol for a supervisor course, will I need to wait two more years to apply for another NHS-funded training?**

Supervisor courses are not included in the 2-year funding policy as this does not result in a change in occupation. You can undertake supervisor training and will not have to wait a further two years before being eligible to undertake an NHS-funded psychological professions training programme.

## **Specific psychological professions training programmes FAQs**

### **12. I finished my NHS-funded psychological professions training programme in 2021. Can I apply for another in 2023?**

There would normally be no ‘retrospective’ application of the policy to individuals who started one of the affected NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes by 1 April 2022 (although existing restrictions on transition from Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners to High intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training are retained, see FAQ 14).

**13. In the event a person started one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes from 01 April 2022, and does not complete their training programme (i.e., withdraws or does not qualify) and wishes to train in another psychological profession, would they be eligible to apply for a second NHS-funded psychological professions training programme without needing to wait two years?**

The policy would be expected to apply in this instance, and the individual would not normally be eligible for another NHS-funded psychological professions training programme for 2-years from the date of the qualifying exam board, or the post-exam board date that the individual award is formally recommended by Chair's action, of the first training course they withdrew from or did not complete the qualifying requirements.

We have undertaken equality impact analysis to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged by this policy change from an equality, diversity, and inclusion perspective. HEE have developed an extenuating circumstances process and principles to guide implementation by training providers and employers.

The recruiting employer, with support from the recruiting training provider, is responsible for assessing and determining the eligibility of a trainee on an NHS-funded psychological professions training programme under the 'extenuating circumstances' process. Contact your training provider or employer for more information on extenuating circumstances.

**14. I started my Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training before the 1 April 2022, why do I have to wait two years before being eligible to start an NHS-funded IAPT high intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training course?**

In September 2018, the IAPT Education and Training Expert Reference Group established a 2-year rule for Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP) seeking to undertake training in High Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (referred to as HIT below) training. This was published in the [Position Statement on Recruitment of IAPT Trainees](#) (September 2018):

***2. Progression from PWP to HIT training***

*2.1 Health Education England (HEE) commissioners consider progression from PWP to HIT training an integrated training pathway within which PWPs are eligible to apply for HI training when they have completed a minimum of two years of employment as a PWP after passing all PWP course requirements at internal exam board. HEE will not fund trainees who do not meet this requirement.*

*The only exception to this two-year rule is if a PWP holds a previous core professional qualification recognised by the [British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies \(BABCP\)](#). All advertising and recruitment materials should reflect the commissioners' two-year rule.*

The 'Progression from PWP to HIT training' rule (2018) will continue to apply.

**15. I started my Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner training before the 1 April 2022 and want to apply for one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes, such as clinical psychology. Do I need to wait 2-years before being eligible for NHS funding?**

With the exception of the IAPT high intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy trainings (see FAQ 13), as a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner who started training before the 1 April 2022, if you are offered a place on one of the other NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes, you would be eligible for NHS funding.

There is **no** 'retrospective' application of the policy to individuals who started one of the affected NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes by 1 April 2022 (although existing restrictions on transition from Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner to High Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training are retained).

**16. I started an NHS-funded psychological professions training role (included in the list) in January 2022. I applied for the clinical psychology doctorate in Oct 2022 and, if offered a place to start in 2023, will I be eligible for NHS funding?**

Employers should be looking and are encouraged to retain people who are offered an NHS-funded psychological professions training role and may ask an applicant about their intentions for delivering the role they are being trained for.

However, as you started the role in before the 1 April 2022, you would be eligible for NHS funding for the clinical psychology doctorate if offered a place to start in 2023 or 2024 (and beyond).

There is **no** 'retrospective' application of the policy to individuals who started one of the affected NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes by 1 April 2022 (although existing restrictions on transition from PWP to HIT-CBT training are retained).

**17. Should I quit my current training programme (which is listed), to be eligible for funding for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology?**

If you started on one of the listed courses before 1 April 2022, you will not need to quit your training programme to be eligible for NHS funding (if offered a place) on a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology programme starting in 2023 or 2024 academic years.

On 9 September 2021, the eligibility for NHS funding was extended to all who started one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes by 1 April 2022, and who receive offers from clinical psychology training programmes to start in the 2023 or 2024 academic years.

This means that there will now be no 'retrospective' application of the policy (for the 2023 and 2024 intakes for clinical psychology training programmes) for individuals who started on one of the NHS-funded psychological professions training programmes before 1 April 2022.

**18. How is HEE going to ensure psychological professions training course providers and clearing house stop recommending many of the roles listed as formal routes to clinical psychology training and applicants are aware of the funding eligibility in the future before they commit to an NHS funding course?**

The implementation of the change will be part of the expectation of HEE for all commissioned courses. This will ensure applicants for all courses are made aware of the policy when considering applying. National career information will also be updated to reflect this.

**19. Why do clinical psychology programmes require clinical experience for entry?**

There is no HEE requirement for this, and some programmes do not require any clinical experience for entry, for example allowing direct progression from undergraduate into doctorate study.

There are different views about the necessity or otherwise of clinical experience as an entry criterion. Some education providers and employers highly value the consolidation of clinical skills prior to clinical psychology training. Others would like clinical psychology entry to reflect aptitude more than experience.

Further review of this issue is needed. HEE has asked all clinical psychology programmes to seek to remove the advantage gained by those able to afford to undertake voluntary experience.

**Additional questions**

**20. How is HEE going to widen engagement around psychological professions education and training changes in the future?**

HEE's Mental Health Programme will continue to develop an engagement process and build relationships with psychological professions stakeholders to support education and training changes.

During the engagement process for this policy change, HEE engaged with a wide range of groups, including:

- Psychological Professions Network – South East Aspiring Psychological Professionals Subnetwork
- BPS (British Psychological Society) and representatives including the Division of Clinical Psychology Pre-Qualification Group and Minorities Group
- Valued Voices mentoring scheme participants
- Other professional bodies
- Policy and Equality Leads/Advisors
- Education providers and Group of Trainers in Clinical Psychology
- Employers and service providers
- Health education commissioners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Unions
- Psychological Professions Workforce Group.

This activity shaped our equality impact assessment and next steps in policy implementation. It has also formed positive foundations of strong working relationships with our stakeholders and our engagement approach, which we plan to build on.

**21. Will there be any impact on courses in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland?**  
 HEE have had discussions across the four nations. HEE cannot determine what each nation does in response to this policy change. HEE will continue to work collaboratively with colleagues in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to reduce any negative unintended cross-border issues with this policy change.

**Employer FAQ's**

**22. As an employer, during the recruitment period should I ask a potential trainee about their intentions following qualification?**

Employers should be looking and are encouraged to retain people who are offered an NHS-funded psychological professions training role and may ask an applicant about their intentions for working in the qualified role they are being trained for.

**23. Once a psychological professional has completed training and qualified, are they expected to be offered a permanent contract?**

The training for these, and some other psychological professions roles, is fully NHS-funded, and trainees may receive a salary during training. Usually, during recruitment to these posts, there is a discussion about an expectation to continue in the qualified role.

On successful completion of the training, it is the expectation from HEE and NHS England, that trainees in some of these occupations should be offered a permanent contract in the organisation. The public investment is designed to expand the workforce in these occupations. NHS England and HEE's relevant guidance should be followed.

**Revision History**

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1	23 November 2021	First publication.
2	13 December 2021	Minor revisions to Question 14.
3	02 February 2022	Minor revisions to Question 1, including updated list of affected Psychological Professions Programmes.
4	21 February 2022	Addition of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) to list of affected Psychological Professions Programmes
5	02 March 2022	Addition of question 23 clarifying eligibility for modality or upskilling training
6	18 May 2022	General revisions to introduction paragraphs
7	20 June 2022	Addition of new question 10 providing clarity around 2021 finishers and revision of subsequent question numbers.
8	19 July 2022	Addition of question 25, clarifying enrolment in supervisor courses, and question 26 around extenuating circumstances
9	29 July 2022	General revisions to introduction paragraphs
10	01 November 2022	Review and update of all questions to align application to all psychological professions training programmes and release of implementation guidance.  Addition of employer specific FAQs.