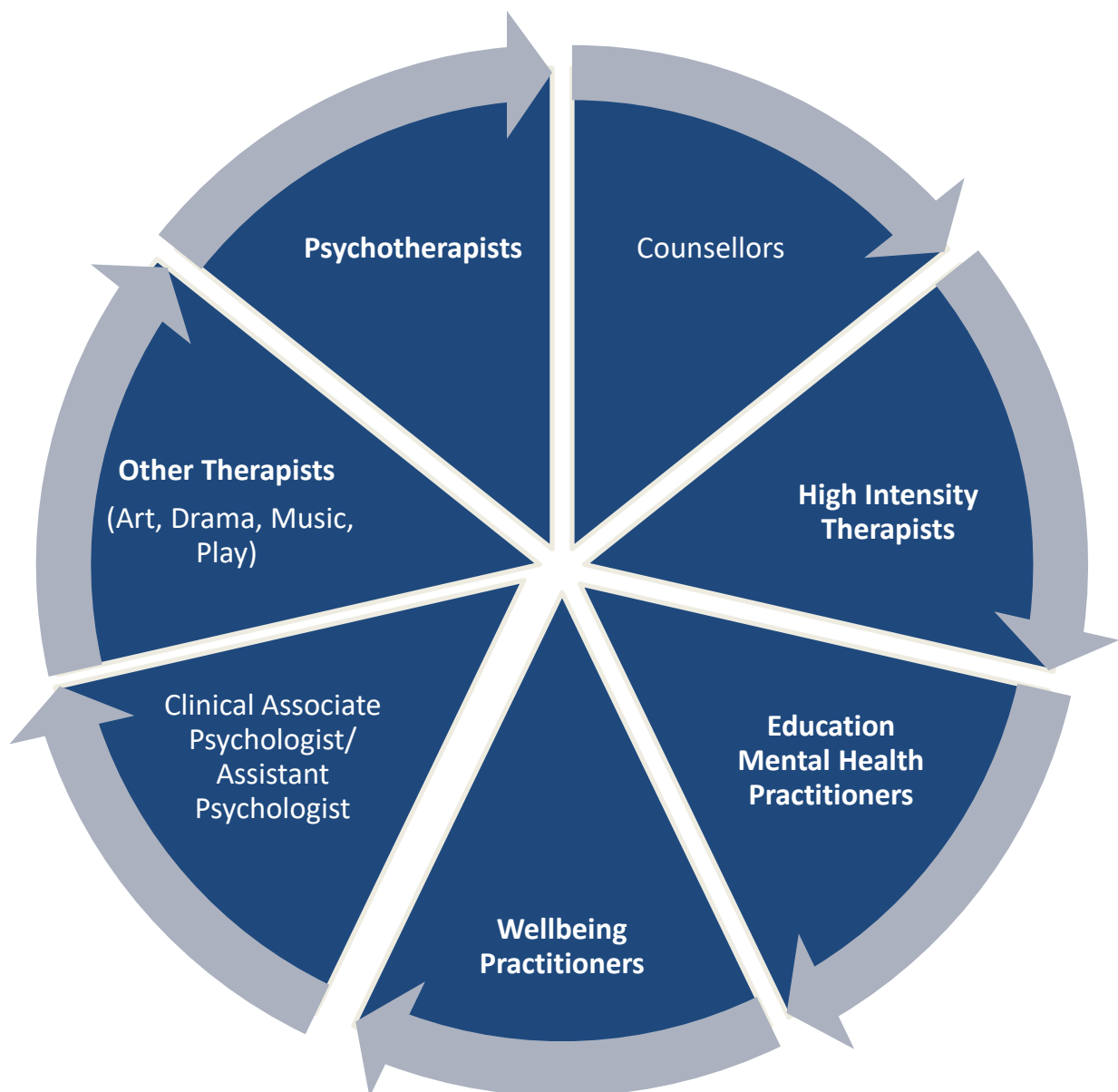


Careers in Counselling & Psychological Therapies

If you are interested in how people think and behave and want to use the study of psychology to help people with mental ill health, a career in the psychological therapies could be for you. As well as professional roles such as Counselling, Clinical or Health Psychologist, there is a range of different opportunities within the sector. This leaflet gives a brief overview of these roles. To find out more about psychologist roles please see the links at the end of this leaflet.



1. Counsellor

[Counsellors](#) help people to explore feelings and emotions often related to their experiences. This allows clients to reflect on what is happening to them and consider alternative ways of doing things. Counsellors do not give advice but help clients to make their own choices.

There are currently no set entry requirements but most employers look for practitioners with recognised professional counselling qualifications and membership of a professional body such as [BACP](#) (British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy), [UKCP](#) (UK Council for Psychotherapy) or the [NCS](#) (National Counselling Society).

There are different types and levels of courses available including at diploma, degree and postgraduate level. Some are available on a part-time basis, others full-time. The BACP recommends that a three-stage training route is followed, which comprises the following courses:

1. **Introduction to counselling (Level 2):** provides basic counselling skills and an overview of training before committing to a full counselling course. Typically, lasts 8 to 12 weeks and is available at further education (FE) colleges.
2. **Certificate in counselling (Level 3):** provides theoretical understanding of counselling at a deeper level, develops counselling skills and prepares for the core training at the next stage. Courses last a year when studied part time at FE colleges.
3. **Minimum diploma level qualification in counselling (Level 4 or above):** courses at this level should meet BACP requirements of being at least one year full time or two years part time, with a minimum of 100 hours in a supervised placement. The course may be at diploma, degree or postgraduate level. Qualifications that meet these requirements enable you to get membership with the BACP.

A degree in a related subject, such as nursing, psychology, social work or education may be useful in the career and might help you to get onto a counselling course. However, previous counselling skills and evidence that you have the necessary personal qualities are just as important as academic achievement. Check with individual providers for entry requirements. Client contact experience is also essential whilst studying counselling courses in order to gain membership with professional bodies.

2. High Intensity Therapist

[High intensity therapists](#) support individuals of all ages and cultural backgrounds who are experiencing mental health conditions, in particular moderate to severe depression and anxiety. They offer a range of high-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based interventions, such as imagery rescripting and exposure therapy, to help patients manage their own recovery.

To practise as a high intensity therapist you must be registered with the [BABCP](#) (British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies). To achieve this you must successfully complete a BABCP [accredited postgraduate diploma](#), which has a curriculum set by the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) programme. The diploma lasts one year full time, or two years part time. Each week you'll spend a combination of days at university and in a clinical setting undergoing supervised practice.

To get a place on a training course, you'll need a registered qualification at graduate level in nursing, social work, occupational therapy, counselling, psychotherapy or clinical psychology or provide a portfolio of evidence showing that your skills, experience and competencies meet the BABCP's Knowledge Skills and Attitude [requirements](#).

Most trainees gain the necessary evidence through working as a PWP (psychological wellbeing practitioner). If you've qualified as a PWP, you'll need two years' post-qualification experience before applying for high intensity therapy training.

3. Education Mental Health Practitioner

[Education Mental Health Practitioners](#) deliver high-quality, evidence-based early interventions for children and young people experiencing mental health problems within their school or college, and referring on to specialist support as necessary. They work across education and healthcare settings to provide early intervention mental health support. These new roles support the Government's priority of increasing access to and availability of mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people.

Successful candidates will be offered a 12 month full-time education programme through a combination of study at university and supervised practice learning experience, gaining knowledge and understanding across both education and mental health services.

Trainees will be supervised and supported to gain the necessary skills and abilities to deliver high-quality, evidence-based early interventions for children and young people experiencing mental health problems within their educational setting, and referring on to specialist support as necessary.

The training will be funded at the equivalent of [Agenda for Change](#) Band 4 and you will gain academic credit at postgraduate level. Once you've successfully completed the training, you'll be:

- qualified as an EMHP
- guaranteed a job as part of a mental health support team working in education settings

Specific entry requirements are set by each university so it's important to check carefully. However, all applicants must demonstrate the ability to work at degree level or have an equivalent level of relevant experience, with a proven record of previous learning or formal study in child development, wellbeing or mental health.

4. Wellbeing Practitioner

Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner

[Psychological wellbeing practitioners](#) (PWP) support individuals of all ages and cultural backgrounds experiencing common mental health difficulties such as mild to moderate symptoms of depression, anxiety and low mood. They work to aid clinical improvement and social inclusion and offer a range of low intensity CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) based interventions to help clients manage their own recovery.

Although you don't need a degree to train as a PWP, many trainee roles request a relevant degree. However, commitment to supporting patients with mental health conditions and relevant work experience are equally important in securing a trainee place. The role therefore appeals to people from a range of backgrounds and competition for trainee places is strong.

Training for the PWP role is set by the national IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapy) programme and is delivered by universities so trainees must be able to show that they can study to postgraduate certificate level.

In order to get a place, you need to be employed as a trainee PWP by a local IAPT service. Applications for Trainee PWP posts need to be made to an organisation providing an Improving Access to Psychological Therapy ([IAPT](#)) service in order to access the training. Selection for training places is carried out jointly between service and academic course providers and if successful, both a job and training place are offered.

Training courses are accredited by the [British Psychological Society \(BPS\)](#) and a [list](#) of courses can be found on their website. As the course is a requirement of the trainee role, it's usually funded by your employer. Individual course centres can advise about any self-funded places that may be available.

Training usually lasts around a year and consists of 45 days of academic work (one day per week at university) and four days a week in supervised practice within your workplace.

Children's Wellbeing Practitioner

[Children's Wellbeing Practitioner](#) (CWP) support children and young people with low to moderate mental health difficulties such as anxiety, low mood and behavioural difficulties. They provide interventions such as guided self-help and therapeutic activities, alongside sign-posting and referring to other mental health services, when required.

To train as a CWP, you will need to find and apply for a trainee CWP position in a children and young people's mental health service to access the training. You do not need a degree to train although if you have a degree you would usually undertake a postgraduate certificate, rather than an undergraduate level qualification which is offered for trainees without a degree. For both routes you will need experience of working with children and young people to support their mental health. A knowledge of child and adolescent development, good communications skills and the ability to study at undergraduate level are also required.

5. [Clinical Associate Psychologist/ Assistant Psychologist](#)

Clinical Associate Psychologist (CAP) are new roles for specialist mental health professionals whose duties include assessing, formulating, and treating clients within specified ranges of conditions and age, either in primary care/adult mental health settings or in a range of areas involving children, young people, and their families. They are able to practice autonomously with appropriate support, working within their scope of practice, under the supervision of a registered clinical psychologist. Although their role can be used in a variety of settings, in practice CAPS tends to be trained to work with particular groups of people.

To train as a CAP you need to be a psychology graduate and be accepted on to a trainee CAP role. This will lead to a one-year training programme at Masters level, with up to half of your training on clinical placement so you can put your academic learning into practice.

For more information go to <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019.03.14-CAP-FAQS-v2.pdf>

To find out which universities are currently offering CAP training go to <https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/591/providers>

[Assistant Psychologists](#) (APs) undertake a variety of roles in supporting people with mental health problems. They work under the direct supervision of a qualified psychologist to provide clinical support patients and service users. They may conduct neuropsychological assessments, undertake specified behavioural observations and assessments, and carry out specified treatment and intervention programmes with clients or groups of clients. You'll need to be a psychology graduate and have a range of skills, including a knowledge of psychological theory, an interest in how people think and behave and the ability to relate to a wide range of people including patients and colleagues.

The AP role has traditionally been used as a route into the Clinical Psychology doctorate, but now the CAP role is seen as a viable alternative, offering status and training in its own right.

6. Other Therapists

[Art therapists](#) use visual art media to help people who may struggle to communicate verbally to express their feelings and confront difficult emotional issues.

To practise as an art therapist you must be registered with the **[HCPC](#)** (Health & Care Professions Council). To register, you must successfully complete an HCPC approved postgraduate qualification in art therapy or art psychotherapy. Most candidates for postgraduate qualification will have a first degree in fine art, visual arts or art and design. The following degree subjects may also be considered as relevant by course providers: education, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology and social work.

All course providers will require you to have experience of artistic practice and may ask to see a portfolio of artwork.

[Drama Therapists](#) use the performance arts to provide a safe environment to help people explore, address and deal with a range of personal and social difficulties.

Professional training is at postgraduate level at one of the following institutions approved by the **[HCPC](#)** (Health & Care Professions Council): Anglia Ruskin University, Roehampton University, Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, University of London, University of Derby.

On successfully graduating from one of these courses, you're eligible to register with the HCPC and practise as a dramatherapist. You can also apply for full membership of the **[BADth](#)** (British Association of Dramatherapists). See their **[website](#)** for a list of approved training courses.

To get a place on a course, you'll usually need a degree in drama, performing arts or a psychological health-related subject. Alternatively, you could have a relevant professional qualification such as social work, teaching, nursing or occupational therapy and current evidence of theatre experience.

[Music Therapists](#) use music creatively to help their clients address social, emotional or physical difficulties and facilitate positive changes in their behaviour and well-being.

Professional training is at postgraduate level at one of the following institutions approved by the **[HCPC](#)** (Health & Care Professions Council): Anglia Ruskin University, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Nordoff Robbins, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, University of Roehampton, University of South Wales, University of the West of England, Bristol.

Graduates from these programmes are eligible for HCPC registration and full membership of the **[BAMT](#)** (British Association for Music Therapy). You will need a high level of musicianship, as well as academic and personal skills, to get a place on a training course. Although some applicants

have a music degree or equivalent, you may also be considered if your degree is in another subject, such as medicine, nursing, psychology or education, as long as you can show proficiency in musical performance.

[Play Therapists](#) usually work with children aged three to 11 and their families using play as a communication tool to understand their world and to help them deal with difficult life issues and experiences, emotional distress and trauma.

You will need to get a relevant postgraduate qualification to qualify as a play therapist and to register with the [BAPT](#) (British Association of Play Therapists) or [PTUK](#) (The UK Society for Play and Creative Art Therapies). Both these organisations provide a register of qualified play therapists to employers and families and ensure practice standards are met across the industry.

The two qualification routes are:

- Masters degree in play therapy practice recognised by the BAPT from the University of Roehampton, University of South Wales or Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. For more information, see the [BAPT site](#).
- Masters qualification offered by PTUK through Leeds Beckett University. The PTUK also provides a range of postgraduate certificate and diploma-level courses that can be taken towards the Masters degree. To find out more see the [PTUK site](#).

To get a place on a course you'll need a degree in a subject related to child development, such as psychology, teaching or social work, as well as at least two years direct experience of working with children in a developmental role. Play therapy is often a second career for many.

7. Psychotherapist

[Psychotherapists](#) work with individuals, couples, families and groups to help them overcome a range of psychological and emotional issues. They use personal treatment plans and a variety of non-medical treatments to address the client's thought processes, feelings and behaviour, understand inner conflicts and find new ways to alleviate and deal with distress.

Applicants will need an honours degree completed to a high standard in a relevant subject (such as psychology, nursing, medicine, social work and sociology) and have previous experience from working in a related area, such as social work, mental health professions, psychology and psychiatry.

A postgraduate qualification is essential. To secure a position within a recognised public institution, training that conforms to standards set by the [UKCP](#) (UK Council for Psychotherapy), the [ACP](#) (Association of Child Psychotherapists) or the [BCP](#) (British Psychoanalytic Council) is usually required. Psychotherapy training courses normally last four years of study and clinical training, part-time. Prospective employers will specify which psychology qualification they seek in their job adverts, so it can be useful to consult job postings on NHS Jobs before deciding on a training course.

Further Information

Finding Experience

Relevant experience will be important for all the job roles mentioned above. This might start whilst you are still studying, through volunteering or part time work. In addition you may well need to gain further experience as a support worker or similar before entering these roles.

Search existing volunteering opportunities on:

- www.do-it.life
- www.worcsu.com/volunteer/providers/

See our '**Building Work Experience for Professional Psychology Doctorates**' leaflet for local organisations who have taken students previously available from **firstpoint**.

Contact organisations, charities, support groups and helplines who provide advice/services to see if they can offer you some experience.

Finding Jobs

Many of the job roles indicated above are advertised at

- www.jobs.nhs.uk/.

In addition, look at professional bodies, charities, and local authority websites. In the Worcestershire area look at

- www.wmjjobs.co.uk
- www.onside-advocacy.org.uk/
- <https://springfieldmind.org.uk/>
- www.barnardos.org.uk/work-with-us

For more detailed information about the careers mentioned in this leaflet:

- <https://careers.bps.org.uk/>
- www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles
- www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles

For list of the different types of therapy go to:

- www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/types-of-therapy

Also see our '[Careers with Psychology](#)', '[Building Work Experience for Psychology Doctorates](#)', '[Working with People](#)' and '[Working with Children & Young People](#)' leaflets all available from **firstpoint** or the careers webpages at www.worc.ac.uk/careers

If you would like to book a careers appointment to discuss your options, please visit: <https://worcester.targetconnect.net>

myCareer

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