
Clinical Neuropsychology

What is a Clinical Neuropsychologist?

Clinical Neuropsychology is concerned with the assessment and rehabilitation of people with brain injury, neurological disease or neurodevelopmental conditions.

Clinical Neuropsychologists are specially trained to understand the relationship between brain and neuropsychological function. Clinical neuropsychologists require not only knowledge of the broad range of mental health problems, but also specialist knowledge in the neurosciences.

Brain injuries and neurological illnesses and conditions can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. It is the clinical neuropsychologist's job to assess and help to treat the effects of these problems.

What do Neuropsychologist's do?

Clinical neuropsychologists work with people who have, or who are thought to have, illnesses or injuries that affect the function of the brain or central nervous system.

This includes illnesses and injuries such as Stroke, Traumatic brain injury, Multiple sclerosis, Dementia, Functional neurological symptoms, ADHD and Autism.

Clinical Neuropsychologists complete comprehensive assessments of cognition, emotion and behaviour and prepare reports for clients and health professionals. They provide neuropsychological rehabilitation of people with brain injury or other neurological disease. Rehabilitation techniques stem from a broad range of psychological models but are typically goal focused and aimed at improving function and understanding of the biopsychosocial factors influencing the client.

Clinical neuropsychologists often work as part of multi-disciplinary teams including [neurosurgeons](#), [neurologists](#) and [allied health professionals](#).

How do I train?

Many Clinical Psychologists choose to work in an area of neuropsychology without taking further training.

In order to become a Clinical Psychologist, you will need to complete a 3- or 4- year Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

[There are several courses throughout the UK and you can search for one on the British Psychological Society \(BPS\) website and filter by “Clinical Psychology” \(https://www.bps.org.uk/find-course\).](https://www.bps.org.uk/find-course)

Neuropsychology is a post qualification discipline available to chartered clinical psychologists within the field of educational or clinical psychology. On completion of training practitioners will usually work for at least a year in a specialist service and then undertake the British Psychological Society's Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology (QiCN).

[The QiCN involves completing a postdoctoral diploma in clinical neuropsychology and examination of a two year portfolio of clinical neuropsychology cases \(https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/society-qualifications/qualification-clinical-neuropsychology\).](https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/society-qualifications/qualification-clinical-neuropsychology)

Entry Requirements

In order to become a Clinical psychologist and progress on to the above Doctoral Programmes you will need

A minimum of an upper second class (2:1) honours degree in Psychology

If you have a lower second class (2:2) honours degree in Psychology then you may be considered if you have also completed an MSc in Psychology with a heavy emphasis on research methods. This is to demonstrate your ability to do this at a doctoral level, as required by the professional doctorate

Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the British Psychological Society

At least six months full-time relevant clinical experience, either paid or voluntary. Research experience is **also essential**.

Previous Experiences Required

Applications to clinical psychology training are very competitive and many students apply more than once. Therefore, it is imperative that you gain as much clinical and / or research experience as possible. If you have a particularly focus on neuropsychology contact the local neuropsychology service, older adults service, dementia care or community based rehab team. Volunteering options to consider are Mencap, Headway, and dementia care agencies. It is always helpful to contact your local volunteering bureau to see what opportunities they may have.

One of the main things you have to be prepared to do to gain the appropriate experience is to work in a voluntary capacity. Many do this alongside paid work and this represents the passion and dedication Clinical Psychologists have toward their profession.

Career Prospects

Clinical Psychologists who specialise in neuropsychology and Neuropsychologists work in a range of settings; the NHS being the most prominent.

Within this context, Neuropsychologists work in acute hospital settings such as neurorehabilitation wards where their main focus is on the early effects of trauma, neurosurgery and neurological diseases. They also work in community teams providing ongoing assessment, rehabilitation and support for people who have sustained brain injury, or who have other neurological problems. Neuropsychologists work in specialist psychological therapy services, in prisons/forensic settings, and in independent practice as self-employed psychologists. Experienced neuropsychologists

may act as expert witnesses for the courts. Neuropsychologists can also work in the academic sector, teaching and training on established psychology programmes

On qualifying, Clinical Psychologists, working in the NHS, would be employed, as all applied psychologists, at a Band 7 on the Agenda for Change Pay Scale; for 2020 the starting salary would be £38,890 and would rise to £44,503. Progression through the NHS grades is typically achieved through being appointed to new roles. As a neuropsychologist your progression would be from a Band 8a up to a Band 9 for Heads of Psychology Services, with Bands 8c and 8d representing Consultant Clinical Psychologist levels.

Working in the Prison service also holds a nationally agreed pay scale and neuropsychologists “working in private practice or in commerce and industry should expect to be remunerated at a comparable level to those employed in the public sector” (BPS 2020).

Any other relevant information

We also have a leaflet titled “FAQs/Differences amongst professions” that you may find helpful to refer to.

Useful Organisations

[British Psychological Society \(https://careers.bps.org.uk/\)](https://careers.bps.org.uk/)

[Health Careers \(https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies\)](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies)

