

Supply of high quality trainees: NES Training Programme.

NES recognises the importance of adding health psychology to the NHS skill mix in Scotland by supporting training posts. Since 2007 NES has jointly funded (with NHS Health Boards) 2 year training posts for health psychologists located in NHS Health Boards in Scotland. Over 25 trainees have undertaken this programme to date. The posts have helped Boards to meet HEAT Targets and Local Delivery Plans in relation to public health, long term conditions and anticipatory care. Projects have included: Promoting breastfeeding; pre-school oral health; sexual health; health coaching in primary care; drug and alcohol services; bowel cancer screening; type 2 diabetes; and upskilling community pharmacists.

Assessing Impact: Outputs from the NES Stage 2 Programme

The level of output from these projects has been high quality, including a large number of publications in peer-review journals, internal reports, international and national conference presentations, workshops, training packages and other dissemination events.

Sustainability and other benefits for the NHS and other health care providers:

- Developing links and sharing best practice between NHS Health Boards.
- Linking academic health psychologists with research expertise from Scottish Universities with the NHS via supervision and collaboration.
- Joint supervision of specific projects, and developing shared supportive networks for trainees and other stakeholders in the programme.
- Developing behaviour change science and research evidence to apply to practice.
- Continuity in post (e.g. NHS Grampian, NHS Fife, NHS Tayside) facilitates long-term sustainable development of input to programmes, for example 'Keep Well'.
- Health psychology led, NES supported jointly funded project with NHS Lanarkshire, and North Lanarkshire Council around: 'Reshaping Care for Older People', to develop psychological capacity among the health and social care workforce.

For more information:

- if you are think you would like to employ a health psychology trainee
- if you are interested in how a health psychology approach might inform your work
- if you are interested in developing a health psychology post in your service
- if you would like more general information about health psychology

please contact:

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For information about some examples of how health psychology approaches can be applied to patient safety see the following publication;

"Health Psychology: Enabling staff to deliver safer patient care using evidence based approaches."
which can be downloaded from NES Psychology;
<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology.aspx>

Or alternatively email: psychology@nes.scot.nhs.uk

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY AT NES

Improving Physical Health
and Health Care in Scotland

Who is this for?

This information is for NHS managers, Public health, Project managers, Commissioners of health psychology training, and anyone delivering health care who wants to improve health behaviour change skills.

What is it for?

- to increase understanding of what health psychology is
- to highlight the relevance of health psychology for your work in health care
- to provide details of how to access health psychology information
- to encourage you to consider employing a health psychologist or a trainee

Why is it important?

Health is all about behaviour

Although most of us know what healthy behaviour is, despite good intentions it is difficult to know how to make lasting changes to lifestyles and long standing habits. The Scottish Government recognises the need for more **effective behaviour change interventions** to improve Scotland's health. The NHS in Scotland also needs a 'psychologically aware' skilled workforce to work collaboratively with patients to deliver effective behaviour change interventions.

What do health psychologists contribute?

Health psychologists apply scientific evidence and psychological theory to understanding and improving health and health care, including coping with illness and disability. Health psychologists are specialists in **health behaviour change**, adding value to existing programmes to improve health, by understanding the complexities of barriers to change and improving the design and effectiveness of interventions to change health behaviour for individuals, social groups and communities.

A qualified **health psychologist** has high level competencies, including:

- **Practice:** Developing professional practice, designing healthcare policy and practice.
- **Implementing interventions for behaviour change and maintenance:** Improving confidence, setting realistic goals, coping with barriers to change.
- **Research:** Designing, implementing and evaluating health research.
- **Consultancy:** Planning, implementing, evaluating healthcare projects for clients.
- **Teaching and training:** Providing evidence-based training.
- Presenting accessible and meaningful **health related information** to help people make better, more informed choices.

How do health psychologists contribute? Health psychologists 'add value' to delivery of healthcare in Scotland for people across the lifespan, for example:

Policy and planning: Including the **Generic Health Behaviour Change Competency Framework** (Dixon and Johnston 2010)¹ which identifies health care training needs.

Health Promotion: Health psychologists can work with public health specialists, contributing theory informed, evidence-based psychological perspectives. For example, delivering for projects such as 'Keep Well', 'Child Healthy Weight Strategy', or Community Pharmacy.

Long-term conditions and anticipatory care: Using group, community or whole population approaches aimed at prevention, improving illness-related health behaviours or coping with chronic conditions, e.g improving adherence to treatment; promoting confidence and well-being in older people. Health and clinical psychologists can work collaboratively to deliver high quality interventions to improve physical health and psychological well-being.

¹ Dixon D., Johnston M. (2010) Health Behaviour Change Competency framework. NHS Health Scotland.

Health Psychology at NES

Health psychologists work as part of the team in the Psychology Directorate at NES and contribute to several projects to enhance physical health and psychological well-being.

Promoting the use of '**human factors**' to improve patient safety is a significant part of this work. Examples of projects based on developing behaviour change skills, include: improving resuscitation-related skills of remote and rural practitioners; improving care for patients with Medically Unexplained Symptoms; improving hand hygiene in trainee doctors; infection prevention in renal care; and contributing to the Mental Health Scottish Patient Safety Programme.