



Trainee Health Psychology Programme

NHS Education for Scotland

What is health psychology?

Health Psychology is the study and application of theories, models and evidence to the areas of physical health, health behaviour change and health care systems.

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 in NHS Health Boards in Scotland. Over forty trainees have undertaken this programme to date.

For further information about health psychology, please see a short presentation developed by the Division of Health Psychology-Scotland: <https://tinyurl.com/HealthPsychScotland>

Information about Health Psychology training routes, and career pathways for health psychologists is available at the link below:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Member%20Networks/Divisions/DHP/DHP%20case%20studies-28Apr%202021.pdf>

The BPS Division of Health Psychology-Scotland website also has a range of 1-page case studies that gives further information about work that Health Psychologists and Trainees have previously undertaken in Scotland:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-health-psychology/dhp-scotland>



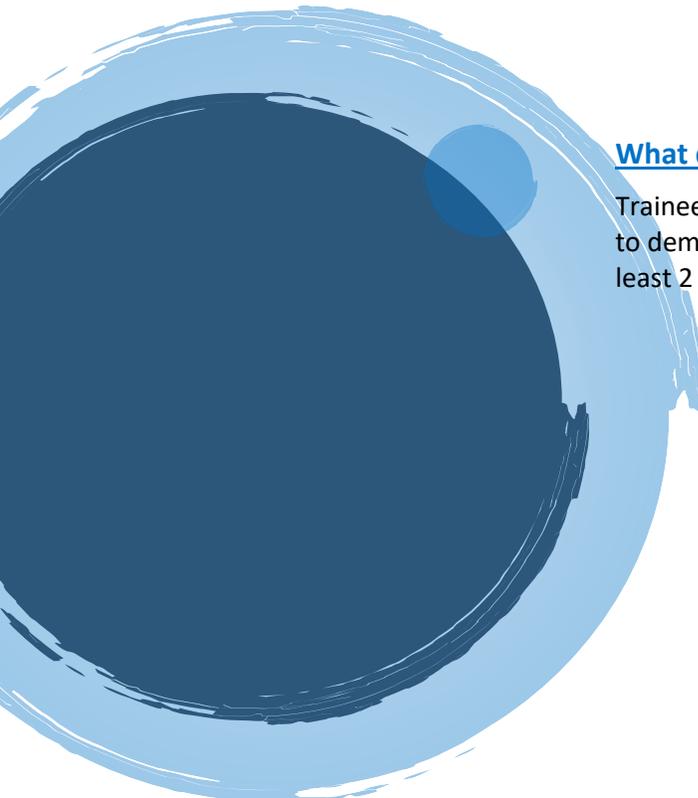
[NHS](#) Education for Scotland, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN



Vivien.Swanson@nhs.scot
Hannah.Dale@nhs.scot



<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/our-work/applied-psychology-professional-training-programmes/>



What do Trainee Health Psychologists have to do for their training?

Trainee Health Psychologists (THPs) undertake work in the following five areas to demonstrate a high level of competence – they do this by working on at least 2 broad health related topics during their training.



Trainees develop their competencies through working full time in the health board, so their competencies should centre around them contributing to relevant projects/work within the board.

The five areas of competence are:

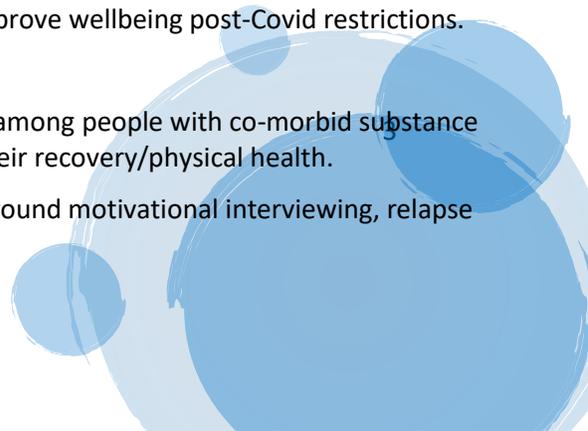
1. Practice: Developing professional practice, designing healthcare policy and practice.
2. Implement psychological interventions: Design, deliver and evaluate interventions (50 hours direct patient contact minimum) for individuals and one other approach (e.g. group/population-based).
3. Teaching and training: Providing theory-driven, evidence-based training for health professionals and one other group e.g. students.
4. Research: Designing, implementing and evaluating research on issues relevant to managing health and health behaviour. Undertaking a systematic review.
5. Consultancy: Planning, implementing, evaluating, a healthcare project for a client (someone outside of their main department).



What work could a Trainee Health Psychologist get involved in?

Any research, interventions, teaching/training and consultancy that focuses on preventing ill health, improving health care systems and managing physical health conditions. Some examples are:

- Weight management:
 - Developing individual and group-based interventions for weight loss maintenance.
 - Developing population- and family-based interventions to support weight management in children
- Staff support and wellbeing:
 - Developing individual, group or web/app-based interventions to support staff wellbeing, resilience and behaviour change, for example weight management, alcohol use.
 - Exploring the systemic factors impacting on staff wellbeing and supporting system-level changes to improve staff wellbeing, including training and resources for managers.
- Covid-19 prevention and recovery:
 - Developing population-level interventions to increase adherence to transmission-reducing behaviours, or increase uptake to vaccinations.
 - Developing group or individual interventions to support adjustment to and self-management of long-Covid, including managing fatigue, breathlessness and activity and stress and wellbeing.
 - Research exploring the factors that contribute to psychological and physical recovery in long-Covid.
 - Developing individual, group or community level interventions to improve wellbeing post-Covid restrictions.
- Substance use
 - Develop research exploring the factors that contribute to outcomes among people with co-morbid substance use and physical health problems and/or interventions to support their recovery/physical health.
 - Developing and delivering staff training, coaching and consultancy around motivational interviewing, relapse prevention and behaviour change in substance use.



FAQs...

What level of skills and competence will Trainee Health Psychologists have?

- Trainees will have completed an MSc in Health Psychology - this is the taught component of doctoral level training in Health Psychology. Specific courses also include basic skills acquisition. For example, in motivational interviewing/CBT. Generally speaking, the MSc will prepare trainees in terms of the knowledge and skills required in Health Psychology. Stage 2 is about translating those skills into applied settings through supervised practice and research.

What type of 1-1 interventions will a Trainee Health Psychologist deliver?

- This varies between placements. All 1-1 interventions should follow an assessment, formulation, treatment planning, intervention, evaluation model. Intervention content is guided by the needs of the service and the evidence-base. Examples include: motivational interviewing and behaviour change techniques for lifestyle change; using self-regulation and transactional models of stress and coping to deliver interventions in re-enablement for older people.
- Interventions draw on health psychology theories and models. These include learning theories, behaviour change theories, theories of illness perceptions, emotion regulation and self-management.

What performance management or quality assurance processes are in place for Trainee Health Psychologists?

- We have developed a framework for mid-training assessments at 6, 12 and 18 months. These aim to assess development and competence across several competencies at each time point. In addition to this, the quarterly BPS reviews provide a mechanism for quality assuring progress.

What training will the Trainee Health Psychologist have to undertake in order to complete their training?

- The NES Programme equips trainees to meet all the competences required by the BPS. NES provides Trainees with training in systematic reviewing, research and publication, assessment and formulation, behaviour change and delivering teaching and training amongst others.
- NES also provides monthly skills practice sessions focussing on intervention skills.
- Any additional training is discretionary and any associated funding will be the responsibility of the employer. For any proposed additional training the Programme Lead should be consulted to ensure it is appropriate for the THP Programme.

Who is responsible for Trainee progression through the two years?

- This responsibility lies primarily with the Health Board, Workplace Supervisor(s) and the Line Manager, however is supported by the NES Co-ordinating Supervisor, Research Supervisor and NES.
- The development of mid-training assessments will assist in identifying areas of progression and areas for further work. Quarterly reviews (led by the Co-ordinating Supervisor) will prioritise areas of work for next 3 months.