Trainee Health Psychology Programme Overview and Impact Summary

The PSD Scotland Trainee Health Psychology Programme is a two-year, doctoral-level applied training programme that develops highly skilled health psychologists to improve population health and healthcare delivery across NHS Scotland.

Role of Health Psychology

Health psychology focuses on how biological, psychological, and social factors influence health behaviours and physical health, and develops interventions to support change. Trainee Health Psychologists (THP) support national priorities (e.g. Population Health Framework) around all levels of prevention, early intervention, and reducing health inequalities.

Impact across training competencies (2016-2026)

The programme is delivered through NHS Scotland placements tailored to service needs. Trainees apply psychological evidence directly into practice, generating measurable impact across four key competencies, in addition to professional skills which spans all four areas:

Psychological interventions

65 interventions designed, delivered, and evaluated across long-term conditions (51%), staff wellbeing (20%), health inequalities (18%), and prevention/early intervention (11%).

Research

25 doctoral research projects and 27 systematic reviews in areas including long-term conditions, health inequalities, prevention, staff wellbeing, and service engagement.

Teaching and training

Programmes developed, delivered and evaluated focused on behaviour change (N=27), Health Psychology theories (N=14), long term conditions (N=15) and staff peer support (N=4).

Consultancy:

Projects delivered across physical health and long-term conditions, prevention, health inequalities, staff health and wellbeing and access to services.

Summary

The THP programme plays a key role in delivering preventative care aligned with NHS priorities. It embeds psychological theory and skills into healthcare systems, improving patient outcomes, supporting workforce improvement, and implementing service development.

PSD2054_ISOG Booklet | September 2026