



The  
British  
Psychological  
Society

Division of Clinical Psychology  
Faculty for Children and Young People

Good Practice Guidelines for UK Clinical Psychology  
Training Providers

Training and consolidation of clinical practice in  
relation to children and young people

## **Purpose and status of this document**

This document has been prepared on behalf of the Faculty for Children and Young People. The document is intended to guide training providers and members of the profession in ensuring that newly-qualified clinical psychologists who may be employed to work with children and families are able to meet the needs of children, young people and families across the range of children's services and contexts. Furthermore, the document aims to provide guidance to ensure clinical psychologists are competent to meet the needs of children, when issues of a child in need arise in other service contexts. An example of this might be when a clinical psychologist working with an adult in Adult Mental Health Services is confronted with a child protection issue.

More and more child clinical psychologists are working in diverse and specialist service settings such as forensic, and in agencies outside of the National Health Service (NHS) such as Social Services. It is the opinion of the Faculty that training programmes should take this into account when preparing trainees who may be considering work with children when qualifying.

This guidance is also intended to aid in planning and evaluating the consolidation of experience and competences of newly-qualified clinical psychologists working with children and young people prior to transition from Agenda for Change band 7 to band 8.

This document has been approved by the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) Training Strategy Group (TSG) for publication and circulation by the DCP.

# Introduction

This document has been prepared in the light of recent publications: The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004), 'Every Child Matters' (2005) and the Children Act (2004).

The National Service Framework (NSF) sets out three key objectives, namely to put children and their families at the centre of care; to develop effective partnership working so that the needs of the child are always considered; and to deliver needs led services (DoH, 2004).

The NSF emphasises five core standards:

- Promoting health and well-being, identifying needs and early intervention;
- Supporting parenting;
- Child, young person and family centred services;
- Growing up into adulthood;
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Similarly 'Every Child Matters' specifies five principles to service provision; that children should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

The NSF further stipulates an increase in child and adolescent mental health services by at least 10 per cent according to agreed local priorities (demonstrated by increased staffing, patient contacts and/or investment). It is the Faculty's view that training programmes should take this into account in the planning and structure of training in order to reflect workforce planning requirements within the NHS. Furthermore, it is a requirement of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Accreditation Criteria for Training Programmes in Clinical Psychology to take into account workforce issues (Section B2.5, CTCP, 2002).

The Children Act (2004) raises issues of how professionals and agencies work together and introduces a duty on local authorities and other services to co-operate to improve the well-being of children.

# BPS Accreditation Criteria for Training Programmes in Clinical Psychology

The criteria for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Training Programmes in Clinical Psychology (CTCP, 2002) highlight that the initial training provides the foundation for the range of skills and knowledge demonstrated by the profession and that these skills are developed and consolidated through further professional development (Section B2.3). This document is intended to aid in planning and evaluating the consolidation of experience and competences of newly-qualified clinical psychologists working with children and families.

The criteria for accreditation requires that training programmes consult with DCP Faculties with regard to the development of the syllabus and preparing trainee clinical psychologists for clinical practice:

*'Programmes should refer to the minimum standards which are identified and revised from time to time by the DCP faculties and SIGs for guidance in relation to the expected capabilities which a trainee should gain to fit them for work with specific populations and groups.'* (Section A6)

*'The national standards as set out by Faculties and SIGs will provide the reference information for the minimum supervised practice commensurate with competence in an area of work.'* (Section 7.2)

*'The development of the syllabus should be informed by consultation with the DCP Faculties and SIGs.'* (Section 9.1)

The accreditation criteria further state that programmes may differ in their emphases and orientations but that trainee clinical psychologists are required to gain experience of working with people across the lifespan and should gain experience of working with children and young people and have teaching on children:

*'A fundamental principle is that trainees must work with clients across the lifespan, such that they see a range of clients whose difficulties are representative of problems across all stages of development.'* (Section B2.6.1)

*'While it is appropriate that programmes should differ in their emphases and orientations, they must all provide academic teaching relevant to the full range of client groups and a wide range of clinical methods and approaches. This will include teaching on children, adults and older adults and cover mild, moderate and severe mental health problems, learning disabilities, sensory and physical handicaps, brain injury, alcohol and other drug problems and a range of physical health problems.'* (Section 9.2)

# Core Competences

Within the core competence framework as specified by the accreditation criteria the Faculty has drawn up a list of competences to assist training programmes in ensuring that trainees have acquired the necessary skills and have at least basic competence to meet the needs of children, young people and families.

## **Transferable Skills:**

- Understanding of theories of child development and knowledge of developmental milestones, the ability to identify early warning signs of atypical psychosocial development.
- Have an understanding of the concepts of vulnerability and resilience with respect to children and families.
- Understanding of children's problems as nested within multiple systems including the child, the family, the school and the wider social network, and knowledge of the impact of parenting practices on the psychological development of children and young people.
- Be able to use the knowledge base of clinical psychology and prior experience to make informed judgements about clinical phenomena when working with children and families.
- Have knowledge of psychological interventions and demonstrate competence in applying these interventions to working with children and families and wider systems.
- Have an understanding of a lifespan perspective and transitions when working with children and families.

## **Psychological Assessment:**

- To be able to communicate and engage with children and young people of different developmental stages using age appropriate language, play and other media, e.g. artwork.
- Be able to conduct an assessment in partnership with a family, engaging and involving all members of the family.
- Be able to select, administer and interpret psychometric assessments with pre-school children, primary school-aged children and adolescents.
- Be able to obtain information from the wider system to inform an understanding of the child's difficulties in the context of the family, school, community and culture.
- Be aware of issues of risk and child protection when assessing children and families and be able to gather appropriate information in order to make a risk assessment, appropriate decisions regarding risk and risk management.

### **Psychological Formulation:**

- Work collaboratively with children and families using a range of psychological models (e.g. cognitive-behavioural, systemic, behavioural, etc.) to develop an understanding of the problems within the context of the family and wider system, taking into account development, gender, culture, economic and social factors.
- Be able to explain a psychological perspective clearly and meaningfully to others, including children, young people and their parents/carers and to other professionals who work with children and families.

### **Psychological Intervention:**

- Based on a formulation be able to develop and implement a psychological intervention which addresses the systems relevant to the maintenance of the child's presenting problem.
- Be able to develop an intervention plan in collaboration with parents, carers and children and to set achievable and realistic goals.

### **Psychological Evaluation:**

- Be able to systematically evaluate interventions with children, parents/carers and to modify the formulation and intervention in response to evaluation feedback.
- Be aware of clinical audit measures for children and models of service evaluation, including the difference between individual outcome measures and population targets and outcomes.

### **Research:**

- Be able to plan, execute and evaluate clinical research, which addresses childhood and adolescent difficulties and be able to show an understanding of the specific ethical issues in research with children.

### **Personal and Professional Skills:**

- Have an understanding of ethical issues when working with children, young people and families and an ability to apply these in complex clinical contexts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of informed consent and the implications for working with children, young people and families.
- Be aware of issues of confidentiality when working with children, young people and families, and complex service systems.
- Have knowledge of local and national guidelines and policies which inform professional practice when working with children and families, in particular child protection policies, National Service Framework and NICE Guidelines.

- Awareness and respect for diversity and difference when working with children, young people and families.
- Be able to use supervision and in particular have an awareness of the impact of working with children at risk, and the need for support and supervision.

### **Communication and Teaching:**

- Demonstrate an ability to communicate with children and young people and their families both in writing and face to face, and adapt communication to meet the needs of the recipient.
- Be able to present a psychological perspective to a range of professionals in children's services including a multi-disciplinary team and in multi-agency settings.

### **Service Delivery:**

- Understand the specific legal and statutory frameworks applicable to children.
- Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the key principles and practices of government legislation and the implications for the delivery of services for children and families.
- Have an understanding of Child Services and the tiers of service delivery.
- To understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of different service providers for children and families (including health, social services, education and the voluntary sector) and work in collaboration with them in delivering psychological interventions.
- Have an understanding of consultancy and be able to use psychological models in liaison and consultation with carers and professionals across a range of service settings.
- Use psychological principles and models to develop innovative services for children and families.

# Mechanisms for achieving competences

All training programmes should ensure that they provide trainees with the experiences and opportunities needed to develop the competences outlined in this document through a mixture of academic teaching and clinical placement experience.

In line with the accreditation criteria it is the view of the Faculty that each training programme should have specialist teaching on children and young people, which covers knowledge and skills specific to working with children as well as teaching which integrates thinking about children in relation to other specialties. Training courses should pay particular attention to the assessment of competence development.

The Faculty recognises that trainees may be able to acquire some of the competences outlined above with other client groups and in a range of service contexts. However, in order to be able to integrate knowledge, skills and clinical experiences, trainees should gain substantial experience within the context of a children and young people service, which ideally would be in the form of a dedicated placement. Alternatives to this model of gaining experience with children should only be considered in consultation with local child specialty supervisors to ensure trainees gain sufficient clinical experience to develop competence in working with children and families and to meet local workforce planning needs.



# Review Process

These guidelines will be reviewed in 2010, at which point CPD requirements should also be considered, including type of competences and experiences that should be consolidated in the first 18 months post-qualification.

## References

Children Act (2004). Chapter 31, Parliamentary Government Act. London: The Stationery Office.

Committee on Training in Clinical Psychology (2002). Criteria for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Training Programmes in Clinical Psychology. Membership and Qualifications Board. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Department of Health (2004). National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. London: Department of Health.

Department for Education and Skills (2005). 'Every Child Matters'. Nottingham: DFES.

# Appendix 1: Members of the Working Group

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# Appendix 2: Consultation Process

An initial draft of this document was circulated in November, 2005, to the National Committee of the DCP Faculty for Children and Young People.

The draft was then circulated to the membership of the Faculty for Children and Young People in January, 2006.

Comments received which suggested a consensus or were based on convincing arguments were incorporated into this final document.

*The British Psychological Society was founded in 1901 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its principle object is to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge.*

**The Society has more than 42,000 members and:**

- has branches in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- accredits around 800 undergraduate degrees;
- accredits over 150 postgraduate professional training courses;
- confers Fellowships for distinguished achievements;
- confers Chartered status for professionally qualified psychologists;
- awards grants to support research and scholarship;
- publishes 10 scientific journals and also jointly publishes *Evidence Based Mental Health* with the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Psychiatrists;
- publishes books in partnership with Blackwells;
- publishes *The Psychologist* each month;
- supports the recruitment of psychologists through the *Appointments Memorandum* and [www.appmemo.co.uk](http://www.appmemo.co.uk);
- provides a free 'Research Digest' by e-mail;
- publishes newsletters for its constituent groups;
- maintains a website ([www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk));
- has international links with psychological societies and associations throughout the world;
- provides a service for the news media and the public;
- has an Ethics Committee and provides service to the Professional Conduct Board;
- maintains a Register of more than 12,000 Chartered Psychologists;
- prepares policy statements and responses to government consultations;
- holds conferences, workshops, continuing professional development and training events;
- recognises distinguished contributions to psychological science and practice through individual awards and honours.

**The Society continues to work to enhance:**

- recruitment – the target is 50,000 members by 2006;
- services – the Society has offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- public understanding of psychology – addressed by regular media activity and outreach events;
- influence on public policy – through the work of its Boards and Parliamentary Officer;
- membership activities – to fully utilise the strengths and diversity of the Society membership.

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