

Job Profile: Trainee Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP)

Sheryl is a Trainee Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP). David started working for the IAPT service in September 2019 and is now 7 months into his training.

A day in the life of a Trainee PWP ...

University Days: One day a week you will go to the University. This starts at 9am and ends at 5pm. During this time we have lectures related to our PWP work. You will be trained in how to assess and treat patient using low intensity CBT. **Study Days:** Once a week you get a study day. This is time to complete tasks set by the University and to complete any self-learning about the job you wish to pursue; such as roleplays, videos or reading journal articles/research. **Working days:** Three days a week, you work in service with real patients. One of the key tasks for a PWP is to assess patient's mental health needs. This is often done over the telephone and takes around 45 minutes. The second major task is providing low-intensity CBT treatment to patients. In-between these two tasks there can be a lot of admin that needs doing such as writing notes for patient's assessments/treatments, writing letters to patients and preparing to take the case to your supervisor.

What do you enjoy most about being a Trainee PWP?

The thing I enjoy the most about the job is the real improvement you can see in your patients' life. Another thing to enjoy about this job is the learning and development possibilities. As you see such a wide variety of patients you are always learning something new. **Flexibility and self-management:** You often have targets such as doing a set amount of assessments and treatment a week. How and when you do these will be up to you as you are in control of your own calendar. I enjoy this aspect of the job as it allows me to work in a way that suits me best.

Challenges...

The challenge of being a PWP is mainly how fast paced the work is. As a Trainee your caseload starts low but builds up over the year. At its height this can be a bit challenging and requires good time management skills to keep on top of everything.

Lots to learn: During this course you will have to be able to learn and put your skills into practice very quickly.

Support...

Trainee PWPs receive a lot of support throughout and beyond the training. You will always have a supervisor to discuss your cases with on a weekly basis. This means you will never have to make a decision about a patient without guidance. The University also provides you with support. You will be assigned one of the lecturers to be your personal tutor and they can help with any concerns you may have.

Key skills and knowledge...

Personal Skills: You will be working directly with patients so having good personal skills is really beneficial. **Psychology Knowledge:** It is beneficial to know about depression and anxiety disorders. **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** All the treatments you will provide are based on CBT. So having a good understanding of this is very helpful. **Organisation:** Having good time management is important.

Future opportunities...

The PWP role is very good for continuing in the field of psychology. **PWP:** Once trained you can work as a qualified PWP. **Senior PWP:** This allows you to supervise other PWPs and trainees. **High Intensity CBT Therapist:** Once you have been a qualified PWP for 2+ years you can apply for another training course. **Clinical Psychology:** use clinical experience to apply for the Clinical Psychology doctorate.

What advice would you give to a prospective Trainee PWP?

If you are interested in becoming a PWP I would recommend researching what IAPT is, the treatments it offers and read some books and articles on low-intensity CBT. There is a booklet by David Richards and Mark Whyte called the "Reach out" guide. This booklet gives a detailed guide to being a PWP and would make you highly prepared for your application and interviews.