



**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW  
DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
HEALTH BOARD INFORMATION**

**Clinical Training within NHS Ayrshire & Arran**

**Applied Psychology Trainees**

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Psychological Services are passionate about providing a high-quality training experience to our applied psychology trainees. We currently offer training posts affiliated with the University of Glasgow Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) programme, the MSc in Applied Psychology for Children and Young People, and MSc in Psychological Therapy in Primary Care.

Ayrshire and Arran currently have 14 DClinPsy Trainees and look forward to welcoming five more in 2026 to work alongside us and our community.

*“Working in A&A has been a really positive experience. As we have a much smaller number of trainees we feel really well integrated into the wider psychology team and people are really interested in who we are, and are genuinely invested in supporting us to develop. It feels as though A&A teams are quite close-knit environments that have really welcomed us, and having close knit teams and great connections has offered us broader placement opportunities, including shadowing wider MDT colleagues.” [feedback from current Ayrshire Trainee, 2025]*

**Geographical Area**

Ayrshire and Arran is a truly beautiful part of the world, with lots to offer outdoor lovers. Ayrshire is rich in history and culture, and with agriculture being one of its largest industries is famous for its delicious home grown produces. As the region is a mixture of rural and urban areas, it also of course offers all the usual amenities found in bigger towns.

Ayrshire and Arran has a population with diverse characteristics including age, disability, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. As a health board we are passionate about population

health and are committed to providing and developing services that are accessible to, and meet the needs of, the diverse population we serve.

### **Placement Locations**

The main administrative bases are in North Ayrshire (Irvine), East Ayrshire (Kilmarnock) and South Ayrshire (Ayr). Like all Boards linked to the UoG DClinPsy programme, placements will likely move between bases as Trainees progress through their training. While Trainees may occasionally have the opportunity to visit the Isle of Arran, no placements are based there.

Many clinicians working in NHS Ayrshire and Arran chose to live in Glasgow and commute to work. There are excellent transport links from Glasgow; with East Ayrshire being approximately 30 minutes by car from the City Centre, North Ayrshire being 40 minutes, & South Ayrshire being one hour away by car or rail.

Consistent feedback from Trainees employed in Ayrshire and living in Glasgow is that the travel time to work is very manageable:

*“I had no prior knowledge of the area or travel times before starting as I moved from England, but i’ve found the 35–55-minute drive (to both Irvine and Ayr) manageable. The journey is often smoother due to us travelling against peak traffic and using mostly motorways. Our GGC colleagues often comment our commute is quicker than trying to cross the city in rush hour.” [feedback from current Ayrshire Trainee, 2025]*

*“I would also say that commuting via public transport can be a feasible and affordable option” [feedback from current Ayrshire Trainee, 2025]*

### **Psychological Services in NHS Ayrshire and Arran**

There is a multi-professional, area-wide Psychological Service within NHS Ayrshire & Arran which employs over 100 members of staff who work to provide high quality culturally informed care. Clinical Services are delivered to the population directly through evidence based psychological intervention with patients, families and carers. The service also provides advice, consultancy, training and supervision in order to develop the psychological skills of other health and non-health professionals.

Trainees regularly make the comment that being an area-wide service means that *“by the end of the three years you will have had the opportunity to meet most, if not all, of the Clinical Psychologists throughout Ayrshire”*. [feedback from previous Ayrshire Trainee]

### **Description of NHS Ayrshire and Arran Psychological Specialties**

Adult Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT, North, East and South). The Psychology Specialty in each of the localities are responsible for providing a wide range of psychological input to the CMHTs, including high intensity/highly specialist 1:1 assessment, formulation

and evidence based therapeutic interventions, and also through working with our MDT colleagues via the provision of staff support, reflective practice and training. The presentations seen among service users accessing the CMHTs in NHS Ayrshire and Arran are wide ranging and include psychosis, anxiety disorders, depression and complex trauma. Each specialty is composed largely of psychological therapies staff, including Clinical Psychologists, CNS in CBT, CAAPS, Counsellors and Trainees. Clinicians within the CMHTs are highly skilled in a variety of therapeutic models, including CBT, CFT, IPT, Schema Therapy, and mindfulness.

The Adult Acute In-patient Service provides psychological input to the adult psychiatric wards based in Woodland View; a modern psychiatric hospital providing a state-of-the-art physical environment. There is a great deal of variety in this specialty and patients often present with complex difficulties and with various different psychiatric diagnoses. The overarching aim of the service is to provide a psychological perspective and understanding to the challenging work of the acute wards, complementing, and working with, our colleagues from other disciplines.

Clinical Forensic Psychology services (In-Patient and Community) within Ayrshire & Arran encompasses three dedicated areas to Forensic Mental Health. These comprise of the Community Forensic Mental Health Team (CFMHT), a Forensic Rehabilitation Ward and a Low Secure Ward. The CFMH service is a tertiary service and we offer three “tiers” of input which can range from direct assessment (including structured risk assessment), treatment and management, to offering consultation and management advice.

Drug & Alcohol Psychology Service (DAPS) is a pan-Ayrshire & Arran team, providing a service across community and in-patient settings to support individuals with drug and alcohol issues. We work within, and alongside, multi-disciplinary teams to provide person centred and integrated support for our clinical population. Further to the provision of direct specialist clinical interventions, a large proportion of our role involves indirect support, through training, consultation and supervision/coaching of our MDT colleagues and wider partners, and promoting staff wellbeing.

The Perinatal Mental Health Service (PMHS) is a community based multidisciplinary team of psychiatry, mental health nurses, psychology, and a CBT nurse specialist, who provide specialist perinatal mental health care to women across Ayrshire and Arran. PMHS work with women who present with and/or are at risk of developing severe mental health concerns specifically related to the perinatal period. In addition to direct therapeutic work with service users, Psychology within PMHS provides support to the wider MDT through training and consultation.

Staff Wellbeing Psychology services is integrated within a wider network of staff wellbeing services (including Staff Care, Peer support, Spiritual Care, Staff Psychiatry and Occupational Health) and is based in one of two staff wellbeing suites in Crosshouse

Hospital. The Psychology Team offers evidence based therapeutic input for staff experiencing moderate to severe psychological distress and reflective practice for staff groups.

Veterans First Point (V1P) Ayrshire and Arran is an NHS service designed by veterans, staffed by veterans, and dedicated to supporting veterans. It offers a holistic, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed approach to addressing a wide range of issues such as mental health issues, addictions, housing, and welfare. Our small team of Clinical/Counselling psychologists deliver evidence-based therapies such as CBT and EMDR for trauma presentations, and work alongside psychiatry who provide psychiatric assessment and medical reviews. Veteran peer support workers play a key role in the team, bringing lived experience to the service.

Clinical Health Psychology Speciality within Ayrshire and Arran provides a service to patients in hospital and the community who have psychological or emotional difficulties associated with a wide range of physical health conditions including but not exclusively: Chronic Pain, Weight Management, Oncology, and Cardiac conditions. The main therapeutic approaches at present are CBT, ACT, CFT, and often encompass generic Health Behaviour Change principles. Input is provided via an excellent skill mix of Clinical Psychologists and CAAPs within the team.

Older Adult Psychology Speciality is a pan-Ayrshire service with an administrative base at Ayrshire Central Hospital. The service provides input into inpatient and outpatient settings in the form of consultation, teaching and training to the wider Multi-disciplinary and Multi agency Teams, and direct assessment and delivery of evidence based psychological therapies to older adults with a range of complex mental health difficulties. The main therapeutic approaches within the service are CBT, Schema Therapy, IPT, ACT, and CFT. In addition, a substantial element of the Teams' work can involve neuropsychological assessment specific to neurodegenerative conditions.

The Neuropsychology Service is a highly specialised clinical psychology pan-Ayrshire service working across in- and out-patient settings, providing direct assessment, intervention, and consultation to clients with disorders of the nervous system, their families and MDT staff. There are four broad areas of service delivery within Ayrshire and Arran's Neuropsychology service: Acute, Neuro-Rehabilitation, Specialist Neurological Services, and Stroke.

Community Learning Disability Services are delivered through multi-disciplinary teams (CLDT's), (including psychiatry, OT, SALT, and Nursing) of which Clinical Psychologists are integral members. The CLDT's are based in Irvine, Kilmarnock, and Ayr. Psychology within the CLDT also have direct input into the inpatient assessment and treatment unit for people with Learning Disabilities sited in Woodland View. Psychologists within the CLDT deliver specialist assessment (neuropsychological and neurodevelopmental) and intervention

(including CBT, CFT, and PBS) in addition to providing consultation and training to the wider MDT.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), including CAMHS Neurodevelopmental Services (N-CAMHS). There are three CAMHS teams based across the three localities (North, East, and South). NHS A&A CAMHS teams are multi-disciplinary and consist of Clinical Psychologists, CAAPs Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, Mental Health Nurses and Occupational Therapists. CAMHS staff deliver a range of therapeutic approaches for Children and Young People (CYP), and their families, who are presenting with moderate to severe mental health presentations in line with the evidence base, including CBT, CFT, and Systemic Family Therapy. N-CAMHS is similarly a Multi-disciplinary service, which provides neuropsychological and neurodevelopmental assessment for conditions such as Intellectual Disability, ASD, ADHD and FASD.

The Community Paediatric Psychology service, embedded within a multi-disciplinary Community Paediatric service in Rainbow House, works alongside Paediatrician, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy colleagues to meet the needs of CYP with certain developmental conditions. Psychologists within the team offer specialist Neuropsychological and Neurodevelopmental assessment, and Psychological intervention to CYP, and their families, presenting with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Applied psychologists within the team deliver a range of therapeutic approaches in line with best evidence base including CBT, CFT, and Theraplay, and offer training and consultancy within its MDT.

The Medical Paediatric Psychology team provides a specialist psychology led service for CYP who are experiencing moderate to severe emotional, behavioural, or mental health difficulties, as a result of their chronic medical condition. Medical Paediatrics is based in Crosshouse Hospital and are integrated within the various multidisciplinary health teams. Psychology offer input within four specialist medical teams: Respiratory, Diabetes, Epilepsy, and Rheumatology, and also work directly with CYP presenting with other chronic medical conditions such as pain, fatigue and oncology. Psychology input is offered on an inpatient and outpatient basis and includes consultation, training and direct therapeutic intervention. Therapeutic approaches available within the team include CBT, ACT, CFT, MI, systemic and parenting approaches.

Maternity and Neonatal Psychological Interventions (MNPI) offers psychological assessment and intervention for those who have experienced traumatic birth, pregnancy loss, and who have been required to adjust to difficult news in the context of their pregnancy. The MNPI Service works across Ayrshire's Maternity and Neonatal Units. Psychology provision includes consultation, facilitation of reflective case discussions within the MDT, and direct specialist therapeutic input on a one to one or couples basis. The psychology team also provide neurodevelopmental follow up assessment.

The Infant Mental Health (IMH) service is embedded within Ayrshire and Arran's Children and Family Services and is a pan-Ayrshire & Arran service which aims to promote the emotional wellbeing and development of infants 0-3 by supporting them and their important relationships with parents and caregivers. Psychology within the IMH service operate a tiered service model and provide teaching, training, awareness raising, supervision, reflective space, consultancy and direct assessment and intervention.

The National Secure Adolescent In-Patient Service (Foxgrove) is under development at Ayrshire Central Hospital. Foxgrove will be a 12 bed inpatient unit for adolescents, age 12-17 from across Scotland. The unit will be built to a level of security comparable to Adult regional medium secure services. Patients admitted to the service will require detention under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act, 2003 and will present a significant risk of harm to others. The team will aim to address both health and forensic needs through an MDT approach to care and treatment. Clinical Psychology will be a core member of the clinical team, offering specialist psychological assessment and intervention, forensic risk assessment, teaching, training, consultation and service development.

The Community Eating Disorder Service (CEDS) is a pan Ayrshire service which provides assessment and treatment to patients with Eating Disorders across the life span. Intensive support is provided to patients, and offered to their families and other professionals who support them. Clinical Psychology input to CEDS involves case formulation, supervision of colleagues, training of staff and direct psychological intervention for both children and adults.

**Opportunities for Trainee Clinical Placements.** The wide range of Psychological Specialities within Ayrshire and Arran means that there are excellent opportunities for our Trainees to gain rich experience across a wide variety of clinical settings in line with both DClinPsy course requirements and individual interests.

### **Systems for supporting Trainee Clinical Psychologists.**

Ayrshire and Arran employees can expect to be treated in line with the Boards values of *Safe, Caring and Respectful*. Providing safe spaces for staff, where their emotional and spiritual needs are considered, is an organisational priority, and considered essential in a Culture which encourages us to care for our workforce. Ayrshire and Arran staff have access to a range of wellbeing interventions such as peer support, compassionate listening, and highly specialist psychological therapies if required.

Trainees receive dedicated support from Dr Kim Robertson, Local Area Tutor; who undertakes the co-ordination and support of Psychology Trainee clinical placements within NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

An A&A Trainee Peer Support Network is established and coordinated by trainees within the health board. Current and previous Ayrshire Trainees have commented positively on the support available locally:

*“... as we have a small number of trainees, peer support is strong. We have regular cross-cohort trainee meetings which support shared learning and give us a chance to explore the training trajectory and experiences specific to our health board.” [feedback from current Ayrshire Trainee, 2025]*

**Continuing professional development.** Trainees will have the opportunity to access internal workshops & special interest groups while on placement. Ayrshire and Arran Psychological Services have an active Psychology Research Group, providing support to psychology staff across services undertaking research, audit or quality improvement work, and has strong links with the University of Glasgow (with NHS Ayrshire & Arran Clinical Psychologists contributing considerably to academic teaching on the DClinPsy programme), amongst other academic institutions.

**Line management arrangements.** As an area-wide service, overall responsibility for Psychological Services staff is provided by the Director of Psychological Services. Direct Line Management for Trainees is provided by Consultant or Principal Clinical Psychologists.

**Alignments in Ayrshire and Arran: General Principles.** As detailed in the University of Glasgow DClinPsy course handbook, Trainees with training pathways aligned to specific clinical populations (referred to as ‘Aligned Trainees’) will follow all core elements of the training as per BPS and HCPC guidance requirements to qualify as clinical psychologists.

#### Re Clinical Practice placements

Consistent with the principle underlying alignments; that of increased experience with a defined clinical population, Aligned Trainees within Ayrshire and Arran will complete at least one of their Specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> year placements within their aligned population. Where an Aligned Trainee can gain core first year competencies within their area of alignment, they may be based within that service in first year.

#### Re Academic components

In the context of academic undertakings, as set out within course handbook, Aligned Trainees will carry out at least one of their research components (Major Research Project (MRP) or Quality Improvement (QI) project) related to their aligned population. Which component this is will be influenced by Trainee preference and service need.

#### Re Expectations pertaining to being an NHS Ayrshire and Arran Trainee

Trainees employed by NHS Ayrshire and Arran will have the opportunity to work within the Health Board’s various Psychological Services to gain their clinical practice experience and competencies across training. In regard to research and quality improvement work, Ayrshire and Arran’s Psychological Services are committed to promoting and supporting clinical research locally, and the preference is for Trainees to take forward projects submitted by/based within the Health Board where possible. However, we also understand that trainees may need to look into projects outside of the Board and so flexibility is afforded around this.

**For Further Information:** We would welcome enquiries from applicants. In the first instance, please contact Dr Kim Robertson, Local NHS Psychology Tutor on 01294 323441 or e-mail: [Kim.Robertson@aapct.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Kim.Robertson@aapct.scot.nhs.uk)