

## Applied Psychology

Areas of applied psychology are defined by a number of features:

- 1) The nature of the problems that require a solution
- 2) The target populations who normally serve as clients
- 3) The competencies required to develop and evaluate solutions to problems
- 4) The unique combination of these factors

For example, while clinical psychology addresses mainly health problems (*the nature*), deals with clients and patients who exhibit these problems (*target population*), and consists of practitioners with specialised knowledge of interventions for these problems (*the competencies*), the **profession** of clinical psychology is actually defined by all three of these characteristics together.

The main fields of applied psychology are reflected in the different professional divisions currently represented within the BPS. The main areas are Clinical, Occupational, Educational, Forensic, Health, Sport and exercise, Counselling, Neuropsychology, and Teaching and Research.

Because practitioner psychologists (i.e., any psychologist who works in one of the fields above and calls themselves a ‘psychologist’) all provide services, and in many cases do so to vulnerable groups of people, their practice needs to be properly regulated to protect the public from malpractice and exploitation from untrained individuals.

Since July 2009 practitioner psychologists in the UK have been regulated by the Health Professional Council (HPC). The HPC has designated certain titles as ‘protected titles’ – this means that a practitioner (psychologist) is not allowed to advertise themselves as a ‘psychologist’ of any kind unless they have met the training and performance criteria that allow them to be registered with the HPC.

## Standard of conduct, performance and ethics:

The HPC ensure that practitioners:

- Respect confidentiality, consent and interest of their target group/clients
- Keep skills/knowledge up to date and do not offer services outside their area of expertise
- Do not offer services if their mental or physical health is affecting their practice
- Behave honestly and responsibly in the conduct and promotion of their practice

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| 1. You must act in the best interests of the service users                                                                                        |
| 2. You must respect the confidentiality of service users                                                                                          |
| 3. You must keep high standards of personal conduct                                                                                               |
| 4. You must provide any important information about your conduct and competence                                                                   |
| 5. You must keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date                                                                                |
| 6. You must act within the limits of your knowledge, skills and experience and, if necessary, refer the matter to another practitioner            |
| 7. You must communicate properly and effectively with service users and other practitioners                                                       |
| 8. You must effectively supervise tasks that you have asked other people to carry out                                                             |
| 9. You must get informed consent to give treatment (except in an emergency)                                                                       |
| 10. You must keep accurate records                                                                                                                |
| 11. You must deal fairly and safely with the risks of infection                                                                                   |
| 12. You must limit your work or stop practicing if your performance or judgement is affected by your health                                       |
| 13. You must behave with honesty or integrity and make sure that your behaviour does not damage the public's confidence in you or your profession |
| 14. You must make sure that any advertising you do is accurate                                                                                    |