



## CPD Profile—Forensic Psychologist—early career

**1.1 Full name:**

**1.2 Profession: Forensic Psychologist**

**1.3 Registration number:**

### 2. Summary of recent work experience/practice

Since completing my British Psychological Society (BPS) Diploma in Forensic Psychology three years ago, I have pursued opportunities to enhance my personal and professional development with special enthusiasm. I had done this to some extent throughout my studies, but more specifically in my final year of qualification. My final year placement was with an NHS Mental Health Trust, where as well as individual therapeutic work I ran some personal development groups. This allowed me to enhance and develop a style of collaborative and responsive working with service users. The experience was interesting and useful in that it facilitated my own sense of personal growth, giving me the confidence to pursue my first qualified post having begun to find my own identity as a Psychologist.

My first post is within a hospital-based forensic service, where I have shown myself to be mature and robust enough to deal with the at times challenging interpersonal styles of some of the resident service users—this requires a degree of self-awareness and an ability to contain my own anxiety. I have needed to be flexible in my approach and am keen to become involved in the opportunity to do longer term work. I am having both clinical and managerial supervision by an experienced Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, working within a multidisciplinary team including Psychologists, Social Workers and Counsellors. This experience has been invaluable, and the work I have been able to do with clients has had great depth and resonates strongly with my training base.

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### 3. Personal Statement

**Standard 1: A registrant must maintain a continuous and up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activity.**

Following my initial registration I have maintained a Personal and Professional Development (PPD) and Placement Log which has taken the form of a Practice Diary. This process began as detailed reflective accounts of my experiences and development throughout my training. These were then submitted and assessed by the Division of Forensic Psychology (BPS) at the end of my qualification period, and given back with feedback. This process was something I have

subsequently embedded into my own routine as a practitioner in my first post, keeping a similar, detailed and personal reflective journal.

Whilst I have a strong personally reflective sense of my professional development, and am looking at most professional development from the inside out in the form of my journal, I have also been using the BPS provided online CPD system to record and monitor my CPD activities in a more formal way. I try to update this on a monthly basis, and include pertinent reflections from my journal.

**Standard 2: A registrant must identify that their CPD activities are a mixture of learning activities relevant to current or future practice.**

My activities range from the formal to the informal, and vary in the extent to which they either directly inform practice, or else give me a sense of some personal fulfilment, which in turn can be useful in my work with clients.

As a member of the Division of Forensic Psychology for example I receive the 'Forensic Update' journal; this way I remain aware of current issues, developments, and key players and contacts in the field to be aware of.

Apart from this 'keeping my ear to the ground' approach, I also take formal training courses, which address specific issues that have arisen within my work. This can promote reflection and review of practice in relation to interventions for particular clients, or particular situations, for example.

**Standard 3: A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery.**

**Standard 4: A registrant must seek to ensure that their CPD benefitted the service user.**

The examples below demonstrate how my CPD activity has contributed to my practice, and how by implication I believe my clients have benefited from my professional development. During the period following my qualification, I have developed a deeper understanding of the theories I am applying in my work, and in turn I have a deeper, more refined sense of what CPD activities would be most pertinent at any one time. Throughout my training I was encouraged to refine my own unique and personalised style as a practitioner throughout my career and it is also this, which guides the areas I wish to explore further.

**Journal Articles (Evidence: 2 and 5)**

- I sought out, read and developed understanding of journal articles regarding cognitive problem solving as a collaborative approach to promote and teach to clients, and as a useful set of tools for me to adopt to increase my own decision making processes when working with client's presentation.

This was an area I became interested in as a trainee, and through being able to participate in this area for exemplar research I was able to learn how an information processing approach to cognitive problem solving can help a range of client presentations.



### **Client benefits:**

It is helpful to share with clients that their future wellness can be helped by such a clear approach to aspects of self management which may have been absent in the lives in the past. Of course as a responsive and dedicated psychologist it seemed highly important that I also remain within the client's frame of reference, and responsive and non-judgemental about their developing skills. In this way I have helped gain some insight and understanding of their situation, accepting their thoughts, emotions, and life experiences. The key here has been learning the dynamics of balancing the treatment process enabling change, and self acceptance, and doing this as a collaborative exercise with my clients. Of equal client benefit is the need to ensure that my practice reflects current evidence-based practice, such that I am not only informed in my practice, but am also able to quality assure, to my client the services that they are engaged with.

### **Personal Development Group (Evidence 2 and 3)**

- I am involved in a personal development group; this group includes other recently-qualified psychologists at a similar stage of professional development. The members lead the content and cover whatever is 'brought'.

Participating in these groups facilitates insight into my own level of professional development, and my own processes as a new practitioner, and as the person behind the professional. The workings of the group and the communication that takes place is also highly important, and is explored within the group through collaboratively examining the 'process' just as we might in treatment. A specific example over the period has been understanding the presenting differences that clients with learning disorder arising from information processing deficits can bring to interventions. The use of visual materials as opposed to text-based materials is of particular use in making sure that all clients are able to benefit equally from interventions. This will be an area where further professional development will be required as the complexity of my work increases.

### **Client benefits:**

This provides useful experience of thinking and reflecting on relationship issues in my individual treatment sessions with clients. Reflections borne out of this group can then be taken to peer and line management supervision, which enables supervision to take on a greater quality and depth. In the case of the Learning Disorder example it is particularly important that clients presenting with a variety of responsivity presentations can have their access to effective interventions enhanced.

### **Ongoing Peer/Clinical Supervision (Evidence 6):**

- I am receiving regular clinical supervision with an experienced Clinical and Forensic Psychologist

My supervision sessions have been an invaluable support to me as a newly qualified Forensic Psychologist. Working within a multi-disciplinary team, the pressure can come from other team members and it can be difficult to keep my sense of my role, and what I am trying to achieve with my clients. One aspect of my practice that my supervision has helped me with is just that. My supervisor has helped me keep focused on the goals and boundaries my clients and I have

collaboratively agreed, and to deal with the sometimes-conflicting expectations from other members of the team.

### **Client benefits:**

As an outcome of this activity, I am using a 'Good Lives' approach to work with my own caseload of clients. My supervisor has supported me in keeping sight of this, encouraging me to use my own intuitive and moral judgements in making decisions about the progress of treatments, using theory as a framework but not giving into the temptation to make my clients 'fit' any theory. This means that I am able to be more responsive to my clients' needs when I am practising. This particular approach emphasises recognition of the 'human rights' of clients and the benefits of promoting 'self determination': clients who are able to develop a stronger sense of personal responsibility that is then reinforced effectively in interventions are more likely to succeed in making effective and sustainable future life choices.

### **Formal Training (evidence 4):**

- I attended a conference on the development of psychological interventions with men who have an 'anger management' problem

Given the difficulties which male clients in my workplace often have in respect of their aggression, I applied to attend, and was funded to attend a two-day conference on developments in anger management techniques in mental health settings. From attending I was seeking to enhance my understanding of how theory driven approaches are put into a practical context. The conference was able to provide this and I will now be able to organise such interventions for service users such that benefit for them will be increased by effective implementation that is responsive to their needs and at the same time safe for participants and therapists. This is an area where I had had little prior formal input and wanted to reinforce my reading in a formal setting to ensure understanding of best practice.

### **Client benefits:**

In terms of maximising the benefits that my client group will attain from their stay within the service in which I work it is important to help clients manage the often strong emotions that they feel at both their institutional status and their presenting diagnoses. Being able to work safely with men who can be violent, helping them to manage their behaviour more effectively enables clients to profit most from the therapy on offer more generally.

Total Words: 1099

(Max words: 1500)

#### 4. Summary of supporting evidence submitted.

Evidence Number	Brief descriptions	No. of pages	HCPC CPD Standards
1	Record of CPD activities	5 pages Hard Copy	1, 2 and 4
2	Notes from CPD Journal	3 Pages – Electronic CD	1,2,3 and 4
3	Personal development plan	1 page Electronic CD	2, 3 and 4
4	Certificate of attendance of mental health conference	1 page Hard Copy	2 and 3
5	2 Sample journal entries	4 pages Electronic CD	2, 3 and 4
6	Notes from 2 supervision sessions	2 pages Hard Copy	3, 4