



# Standards for Entry into an ACP Accredited Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Clinical Training

Adopted by the ACP Training Council and Board of Directors May 2021

## 1. Introduction

The training of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists (CAPTs) is longer than many psychological professions to enable the breadth and depth of skills and competences to develop that are required for complex clinical work in the NHS and other health and care settings and to prepare to take up leadership roles post qualification. It is an intensive and emotionally demanding training that prepares trainees to work psychoanalytically with infants, children, young people, parents and families and also with the wider health and care network. Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy is both a clinical training and (in most cases) also a doctoral level qualification. It is a postgraduate entry profession.

The ACP sets minimum standards for entry to the training to ensure candidates have the necessary qualifications, experience and capacities to undertake the CAPT trainings accredited by the ACP.

For many applicants the most straightforward way to demonstrate meeting the requirements will be by qualifying from one of the recognised pre-clinical courses. These courses are listed on the ACP website and help in the development of reflective practice, emotional availability and awareness of oneself. The key components of the pre-clinical courses include extended psychoanalytic infant observations, work discussion seminars, psychoanalytic theory and child development lectures. Courses can be full or part time, modular and spread over time and accessed in various ways.

However, the standards may be met and demonstrated in different ways and they have been written to allow for flexibility and for individuals to take a more modular or portfolio route towards achieving the necessary requirements.

The ACP wishes to actively increase the diversity of the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy profession by improving access to the training and ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly and equitably. The ACP opposes discrimination and prejudice in all forms including against those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010. These standards have been reviewed through an Equalities Impact Assessment in order to ensure they do not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants to the training from those with protected characteristics or otherwise from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is for training schools to ensure that applicants meet the ACP's minimum standards for entry to the training.

## 2. Minimum Standards

### 2.1. Qualifications

The following academic qualifications are required.

**Either:**

***A) A course of study leading to a PG Diploma/Masters (UK academic level 7) that includes the following minimum elements:***

- Psychoanalytically informed infant observation with attendance at seminars across 2 academic years.
  - In some circumstances students can be accepted onto the training with 1 year of infant observation but must then complete the second year during the first year of the clinical training.
- Work discussion – 3 terms of weekly seminars or equivalent if courses are structured differently.
- Psychoanalytic theory – 3 terms of weekly seminars or equivalent if courses are structured differently.
- A course in Child development theory and research.

***And at least one of the following modules:***

- Psychoanalytically informed observational experience of a young child – 6-9 months
- Research design and methodology
- Personality development

**OR:**

***B) The above components, or their equivalent, gained through a combination of other courses that provide some elements of a pre-clinical course but not others.***

It may be that applicants can 'top-up' an existing training that provides some of the requirements with the additional specified modules on one of the pre-clinical courses.

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy is a post graduate entry profession at Post Graduate Diploma or Masters level. Applicants who do not already have an honours degree must gain a master's level qualification. This could be by obtaining a master's degree in one of the recognised pre-clinical courses but might be a master's degree in another discipline as long as the modules of the pre-clinical course are achieved as above.

A pre-clinical course or its equivalent must be completed within a 7-year period prior to the date of application to the training.

### 2.2. Experience

In addition to the components of the pre-clinical course, applicants to train as a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist must have experience of working with children and adolescents. This experience may be gained in a wide range of occupations across health, education, social care and other sectors. Prior experience of working in mental health services is not essential but may be helpful. Applications from those from a diverse range of backgrounds are encouraged.

The following experience is required:

**A) Experience of working in a professional or voluntary capacity with at least two of the following age groups:**

- Ages 0-5
- Ages 6-11
- Ages 12-25

This experience may be gained in a wide range of occupations and settings. For some this might be full-time or part-time over several years whilst others have gained valuable learning and personal development from a shorter or more intensive experience of work with children and young people. It is for training schools to assess whether applicants are able to demonstrate sufficient learning from these experiences to undertake the training but as a minimum the ACP recommends applicants have 500 hours of work experience across the ages.

**B) Experience of working with a range of professionals**

This would usually be as part of a team such as in the NHS, schools, social care, youth justice but could be in a wide range of settings where experience of working with colleagues from different backgrounds and disciplines has been gained.

## **2.3. General**

- An interest in learning to work psychoanalytically with children, young people and families.
- Applicants who wish to apply for an NHS funded post need to be UK citizens or have a relevant visa for the period of the training which shows entitlement to work in the UK.
- Applicants not intending to apply for an NHS funded post need a relevant visa for the period of the training which shows entitlement to study in the UK.
- Commitment to integrating thinking about difference and diversity in all aspects of work.
- Commitment to working within professional and ethical guidelines.
- An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) or equivalent in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## **2.4. Personal Capacities**

Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient personal capacities to be able to undertake the intensive and demanding training in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. Whilst it is difficult for the ACP to set specific standards in this area the following criteria are provided as indicators to help both training schools and applicants consider suitability for the training:

- An ability to draw on others to learn – for example, in supervision, seminars and from team working.
- Awareness of when professional and or personal support is needed.
- Capacity for curiosity and self-reflection.
- Personal Resilience, such as:
  - The ability to keep thinking under pressure.
  - Recognition of the importance of being able to tolerate emotional pain and uncertainty in professional contexts.

### 3. Personal Psychoanalysis/Psychotherapy

Personal psychoanalysis (three/four/five times a week) is an essential component of the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy training. Therefore, as a minimum, applicants to the training should have an understanding of the importance of a personal psychoanalysis in order to undertake psychoanalytic work and what this might entail in terms of the exploration of their conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings. It is appropriate to have some anxiety about this.

The clinical training in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy is open to applicants who have not had yet had an experience of personal psychoanalysis or psychotherapy as it is recognised that this is not always possible due to financial or geographical constraints. It is up to the training schools to assess candidates' suitability for the training on the basis that they can demonstrate they meet the requirements for clinical training.

A period of personal psychoanalysis or psychotherapy is not a requirement within these standards, however, where it is possible, applicants should be supported to begin personal psychotherapy or analysis before they apply to the training as this is an important developmental opportunity. In some circumstances this might be in the form of once or twice weekly therapy and might be accessed remotely through online technologies. Personal tutors and/or potential training schools will be able to think with applicants about their options including advice about suitable analysts and psychotherapists and help for people with limited funds to access some financial support.

All accepted applicants need to be in a position to start their personal analysis at the beginning of their training at the start of the Autumn Term or they will not be able to take up their place.

Where applicants are not accepted onto the training the training schools may recommend that more experience of working with children is required or that applicants who are considered not to be emotionally ready to begin the training should consider personal psychotherapy or analysis before reapplying.

#### About the ACP

The ACP is the professional body and accredited register for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists in the UK. We have been working to improve the mental health of infants, children, young people and families since 1949.

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