

*Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare*



# Training in Psychiatry

**The Severn Postgraduate School of Psychiatry**



Health Education South West

# An Introduction to Severn Postgraduate School of Psychiatry

## About Us

The Severn School of Psychiatry has a remit to oversee and develop high quality psychiatry specialty training in Bristol, Bath, Swindon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset. We have a strong national reputation, with good pass rates in the MRCPsych exams and positive satisfaction scores in the GMC annual trainee survey. In recent years, the core training programme and a number of the school's advanced programmes were ranked overall first nationally in the GMC survey and recruitment of trainees to the school has steadily improved. In 2014 a local trainer was recognized as college trainer of the year and a local trainee was elected president of the College PTC.

Although we have high expectations and are ambitious for our trainees, we are a friendly school and will focus on you as an individual and try to provide the best possible environment and support for your training. We see the aim of training as not just to produce competent psychiatrists, but to help you develop the skills of communication, formulation and reflection which you will continue to develop through your career.



Our faculty members are closely involved in many regional and national training initiatives and we have a range of innovative projects in the school, aimed to improve the quality of local services and training, many of which are led by trainees. We feel the real success of the school depends on us working together with trainees and we encourage trainees to take lead roles and have extensive trainee representation on all of our key meetings and forums.

Trainees mostly work in four different Trusts across the South West: Avon & Wiltshire Partnership, 2gether Foundation, Somerset Partnership and Oxfordshire Health NHS Trusts. As you will see from the information and some of the images in this booklet, there are few better places to live in the UK than the south west. The cities are vibrant, the countryside and coastline stunning and our proximity to London means you never feel cut off from the rest of the world.

## About You

All our trainees have a consultant educational supervisor who will help you to develop an individualised training plan and we ensure that all trainees have good, regular, protected supervision time with their consultant trainer. We are also pleased to provide an in-house core psychiatry course, which has a very strong communication skills training module, to help develop skills and knowledge around the broad psychiatry curriculum and to prepare trainees for the MRCPsych exams.

We have strong links with the University of Bristol, which helps to encourage trainees to complete postgraduate teaching courses and research and there is a programme of internships in all of the main mental health trusts, which helps trainees to develop skills in management and leadership.

We recognise that a trainee's personal circumstances and training needs can change during the period of training. Therefore the school accommodates less than full time (LTFT) training, inter deanery transfers and out of programme experience (OOP) programmes.



### Dr Rob Macpherson

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### Caroline Stitfall

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## Contact Us

If you hope to become a future Severn trainee and want to know more about the opportunities the school can offer you, please visit the School of Psychiatry website at

[www.psychiatry.severndeanery.nhs.uk](http://www.psychiatry.severndeanery.nhs.uk)

Alternatively if you would like to meet up with one of our team, please do get in touch and we will be delighted to arrange this for you.

# Why the south west?

**Because it offers quite simply among the best quality of life in the UK.**

The main urban centre is Bristol, a cosmopolitan, gay-friendly city with a lively arts scene and music for all tastes. Music venues range from St George's (the best acoustics in the UK for classical music) to the Trinity Centre, birthplace of the Bristol sound, with many small and medium sized venues offering a varied menu of music every week.

It has the best restaurant scene outside of London, and foodies are also well catered for by many excellent delis and food markets. Bristol Old Vic is the oldest continually operating theatre in UK - and these days gets healthy competition from smaller venues such as the Tobacco Factory.

**Voted one of the best places to live in the UK**

Sunday Times poll 2014

Bath is a world heritage site and has some of the best Georgian architecture in the country.

Whether you are in search of the latest fashion, or have an eye for a bargain, the retail outlet in Swindon, Wiltshire offers something for everyone. There is also a buzzing arts scene with many events taking place throughout the year at venues including Wyvern Theatre, the Arts Centre and Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Cheltenham is well-known for its literature festival, but also offers jazz, science and music festivals as well as being 'the gateway to the Cotswolds', the largest officially recognised area of outstanding beauty in the country.

Somerset is well known for its outstanding countryside and wildlife and boasts several theatres and a thriving arts centre.

On top of this, the public transport links to and from the south west are excellent: London is under two hours away by train and road, and for sailors and surfers, the coast is very easily accessible.



**I moved to Severn because I thought it had the best of both worlds: it has a proper university city with a really good standard of training but less than two hours away from surfing in Devon at the weekends!**

Eva Stigaard-Laird, trainee in Psychiatry



### GMC Trainee satisfaction survey 2015

Severn School of Psychiatry ranks amongst the highest in trainee satisfaction nationally.



FOR CORE PSYCHIATRY



FOR GENERAL PSYCHIATRY



FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

At present Severn PGME supports around 2,300 trainees in over 12 NHS Trusts in eight locations across the south west. It recognises the potential of these trainees and therefore works alongside ambitious clinicians and educators, who pride themselves on their own professional excellence, to help inspire trainees to fulfil that potential.

The role of the school and the Severn PGME is to ensure that all our training posts provide high quality patient care, whilst also ensuring that trainees gain the best medical education as they progress through their core or advanced programme.

The senior faculty believe that creativity and innovation are central to effective medical education today and encourage trainees to be courageous in actively seeking new ways of improving and creating a first class modern health service.

If you would like to learn more about the Severn School of Psychiatry, why not visit our website at [www.psychiatry.severndeaneary.nhs.uk](http://www.psychiatry.severndeaneary.nhs.uk)



# The core trainee perspective

## The Severn School of Psychiatry offers many opportunities for core trainees to be involved in shaping their own training

Programme Director and senior team listen to feedback from trainees and are flexible in working with trainees to provide a varied and effective training experience. There are a number of ways that trainees can get involved:

### Core trainee representation

The core trainee committee consists of representatives from all years of core training. The committee meets regularly to discuss operational and strategic issues and oversee the quality and development of the programme. Local issues are often raised through rota representatives, who act as a point of contact for those on the rota with queries or concerns.

Trainees are also involved in the monitoring of training and posts through a Quality Assurance Panel. This group helps co-ordinate trainee surveys and

minimum standard setting for levels of training in supervision and teaching for trainers.

Trainees are also involved in regular Core Training course steering group meetings and feedback from trainees has been used to adapt the course to best address the combination of clinical skills and academic knowledge.

### Biannual Core Trainee Forum

Twice a year trainees organise a local meeting, which involves a day out of training to study a topic linked to psychiatry. Previous events have focused on Creative Arts, Films and Philosophy and The Human Rights Act and Psychiatry. In the afternoon a business meeting is held where any issues can be discussed in an informal setting with other trainees.



Psychiatric trainees Rachael Rattlidge and Emma Phillips

# Core training

The Severn School of Psychiatry core training scheme offers a wide variety of training posts, and is designed to equip trainees with the necessary skills and experience to give a broad grounding in psychiatry and to help in preparation for advanced training.



Each post lasts for six months and the scheme is designed to fulfil the curriculum of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

For the first two years, trainees are encouraged to stay in the same geographical area, in order to provide stability and facilitate peer support. The trainee will be allocated a tutor who will oversee and encourage progression. During these two years there is an emphasis in the foundations of psychiatry and trainees will gain experience in general adult, old age and developmental psychiatry.

This will include experience in both inpatient and community psychiatry.

The CT3 year provides an opportunity for trainees to gain experience in more specialist areas of training. Posts available include:

**The CT3 psychotherapy placement offers further opportunities in CAT, to co-facilitate a weekly art therapy group and to supervise medical students to see psychodynamic cases. I have appreciated the flexibility of the training to enable me to do this.**

Josie Lee, trainee in Psychiatry

- Forensic psychiatry,
- Learning disability psychiatry,
- Child and adolescent psychiatry,
- Addiction psychiatry,
- Psychotherapy,
- Liaison psychiatry,
- Rehabilitation psychiatry,
- Neuropsychiatry.

There is also the opportunity to pursue a special interest session in order to further broaden experience of the specialties.

Throughout the three years, all trainees will gain regular experience in psychotherapy, including attendance at a Balint group.

Trainees will participate in regular teaching sessions, both locally and within the core psychiatry training course and will receive an hour of educational supervision each week. A buddy scheme for new trainees provides opportunities for peer support and there are opportunities to teach and support medical students in many posts.

**Linda Heaney**  
Core Training Programme Director

# The core training course

Over recent years we have devised a new core training course. The aim is to equip trainees with skills they will use throughout their careers.

The structure of the course has been adapted to best serve trainees as they progress through their core training. We have worked with trainee reps to ensure that different learning styles are accommodated, and the teaching is interactive.

The course timetable is designed to fit with the exam timetable, so that trainees are well prepared for each paper and the CASC exam.

The course runs over three years: each year builds on the skills and knowledge already acquired.



**Overall we aim to provide a course which is based on sound educational principles, which meets the needs of trainees at each stage in their training, and which encourages active learning.**

## COURSE

# A

(CT1s) concentrates on communication skills and core conditions in psychiatry.

## COURSE

# B

has more emphasis on psychiatric sub specialties and CASC. Clinical skills training is an important element which runs throughout course A and B.

## COURSE

# C

is brief, focussing on post-membership training and interview preparation for ST4. This leaves CT3 trainees time to pursue special interest sessions and research during the rest of the year.



# Severn School of Psychiatry links

## Severn School of Psychiatry has links with three universities which are active in mental health: Bristol, UWE and Bath

Psychiatric research is mainly based at the University of Bristol, where there is a vigorous research programme, which operates across a variety of disciplines. Much of the focus is on anxiety, depression, addiction and psychosis, with psychiatrists, experimental psychologists, epidemiologists and social scientists being involved.

A variety of research methods are used including neuro-imaging, pharmacological challenge tests, randomised clinical trials and large longitudinal studies. Examples of recent and ongoing research activity include:

- Psychopharmacology: anxiety, depression, addiction, sensory neuroscience and sleep
- Health services research: RCTs for the treatment of depression and psychoses
- Epidemiological: mainly depression, anxiety, addiction and schizophrenia
- Forensic mental health
- Cochrane Collaboration Depression, Anxiety and Neurosis group
- The Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC)

The university also has the internationally recognized Dementia Research Group, which focuses on molecular epidemiology and pathogenesis. All of the above is strongly interwoven through the University's overarching theme of Neuroscience, which seeks to promote cross-disciplinary effort in the area.

So, whatever your research, there is something here for you!



# Advanced training

**Looking for a great place for Advanced Training in Psychiatry, then look no further than the Severn School of Psychiatry**

I became an advanced trainee in August 2010 and progressed to a consultant post in liaison after completing my advanced studies and I believe the scheme here is excellent, with more trainee placements than trainees, offering a wide variety of choice.

**The school team is keen to encourage new innovations from trainees, has a strong ethos of supporting our development and are incredibly approachable and friendly.**

A very strong draw to the Severn School of Psychiatry is that we have a full-day for non-clinical special interest, and a full day for clinical special interests per week. We are one of the few schools offering trainees this much time, and it really does open up huge opportunities to personalise your training.

On non-clinical interest days, the school encourages trainees to undertake research, teaching and management over the three year WTE training, however, if you have a particular leaning towards one area, and wish to pursue

this in more depth (ie with a post-graduate course) the school is extremely supportive. Several Trusts within the region run competitive business internships to develop management skills and educational fellowships are available in the School to co-lead educational project work. There is a great academic department of psychiatry at University of Bristol which supports research.

Advanced trainees have our own committee, with opportunities to take on representative roles at numerous school meetings, and our opinions are sought and

respected by school executives. We have recently developed peer support groups, a buddy-scheme between core and advanced trainees, and meet bi-annually for school-wide advanced trainee educational events to encourage networking across the school. We're a friendly, supportive bunch, and I would challenge you to find another school which offers such a wealth of opportunities and positive experiences.

**Dr Leanne Hayward**  
Previous advanced trainee and  
chair of advanced trainees

# The ACF programme

**The Academic Clinical Fellowship programme at the Severn PGME is a great way to start a career in academic psychiatry.**

As well as having dedicated time to perform novel research you'll be adding some variation to your core training, be more autonomous with aspects of your working life and have the time to learn in depth about a specific area of psychiatry that interests you.

The ACF post gives you access to the internationally renowned University of Bristol which has a fantastic history of producing cutting edge research. You'll have dedicated time for research

throughout your core training and a six-month academic placement to really get stuck in. Everyone in the unit, from the professors down, is very approachable and keen to get you involved and support you in your area of interest.

There's access to some amazing facilities such as the Clinical Research and Imaging Centre, the ALSPAC cohort and the Cochrane Centre to name just a few.

This is an excellent programme where you can learn everything from medical statistics to conducting randomised controlled trials and with a very generous study budget lets you go further afield to develop other areas of interest. You have a programme that is exciting, supported, rewarding and an excellent grounding for an academic career in psychiatry.

**Ben Watson**  
ex-Academic Clinical Fellow



# Less than full-time training

**Severn School of Psychiatry supports less than full-time (LTFT) training programme for trainees who have a well-founded reason for being unable to train full time.**

The LTFT scheme was set up in 1969 and has steadily increased in size. The Severn School of Psychiatry has one of the largest proportions of LTFTs in the UK and psychiatry is one of the most popular specialties.

Trainees who have been successful at interview are eligible to apply to be considered for LTFT if they have well-founded reasons which mainly include disability, ill health, the need to care for children, or the need to care for relatives or

dependents. Most eligible trainees have been accommodated in the programme without delay, and usually work 60% whole time equivalent, enabling them to achieve a better work life balance.

There is a training programme director specifically supporting LTFTs in general psychiatry and old age psychiatry and offering advice to those considering part time training. Trainees in other specialties are supported by the individual training programme directors.

The scheme enables trainees to combine an optimised specialty training programme with their other needs. It has been consistently popular, and LTFT trainees have had an excellent record of success in gaining consultant posts after CCT, some of whom might have been lost from the workforce if the scheme had not been available.

**Fiona Harrison**  
Training Programme Director  
for less than full time trainees

**Promoting recruitment to psychiatry: As recruitment rep, I have enjoyed having the chance to be involved in promoting a career in psychiatry. I have helped in projects involving my peers to organise presentations and taster days for foundation doctors and medical students. Having these additional opportunities in parallel with my training has enriched the overall experience. I would wholeheartedly recommend psychiatry training in Severn - please do get in touch via the 'taster days' section on the website or apply to attend our Foundation School if you're interested.**

Ami Kothari, advanced trainee in Psychiatry

# Taking time out of programme (OOP)

**In the Severn School of Psychiatry we have supported trainees to take OOP Training (OOPT) and OOP Experience (OOPE) breaks for various placements including working abroad and writing a novel, studying for a higher degree. We have also supported career breaks for health and other personal reasons.**

The Royal College training Gold Guide provides guidance on the rules around applying for OOP time. This may be used for out of programme training (OOPT), to benefit the doctor (e.g. working in a different health environment/ country) or to help support the health needs of other countries (eg Médecins Sans Frontières, Voluntary Service Overseas, supporting global health partnerships).

Trainees may seek out of programme experience (OOPE), to experience different working practices or gain specific experience in an area of practice,

or contribute to health care in developing countries (as recommended in Global health partnership: the UK contribution to health in developing countries, 2007). They may also take time out to develop a major research programme (OOPR).

You may also seek permission from the PGME team for a career break (OOPC). This may be time to pursue other interests, or a career break to deal with a period of ill health, secure in the knowledge that you can re-join the training scheme when you are well enough to continue.



## Acting up:

Time acting up as a consultant is also encouraged as a part of in-programme training, in the final year of advanced training. This is often a valuable way to develop real experience of the consultant role and we have a well-established system of application and support for trainees acting up.

# The Royal College of Psychiatry and Trainees

Trainee poster presentations at the SW Division of Psychiatry meeting



**Hello, I'm Karl, an advanced psychiatry trainee based in Bristol – I'm glad you're considering psychiatry in the south west. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has contact with trainees more than most other medical colleges, and there are lots of opportunities that stem from it.**

You become a pre-membership psychiatric trainee (PMPT) when you start psychiatry training and the bright yellow British Journal of Psychiatry starts landing on your doormat each month. As well as being the organisation that sets the exams for the membership of the Royal College (MRCPsych) to become a higher trainee it also produces the electronic portfolio used to carry out assessments during your training.

The South West division is based in a beautiful country house in a small village in Somerset; courses are regularly run there including a course to help you pass exams.

There are subsidised places to attend the thriving regional conferences in the South West (with cash prizes for trainees who produce the best posters) and to the International Congress, a four day event each year, a great opportunity to meet other trainees, enjoy exploring a new

UK city and learn psychiatry from those at the top of their field.

The college is unique among medical Royal Colleges in having trainees on all its committees and there is great scope to get involved locally or nationally to improve training or influence policy.

**Karl Scheeres**  
Advanced trainee and Chair,  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Trainees Committee

# Where to go from here

## Recruitment

Health Education North West, working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, coordinates national recruitment to core psychiatry training at year 1 (CT1) and to specialty training at year 4 (ST4) in all six psychiatric specialties in England, Scotland and Wales.

The HENW and college websites contain all the relevant information, including eligibility, participating PGMEs, the sample application form, interviews and estimated number of vacancies.

If you are interested in CT1 / ST4 training in psychiatry in England, Scotland or Wales you will only be able to apply for training posts through the online recruitment portal.

The GMC is responsible for setting the standards and outcomes for postgraduate medical education and training. This involves keeping the standards and requirements under review, preparing additional guidance, and considering how our functions could develop, as well as keeping trainee doctors and others informed about our role. 'The Trainee Doctor' consolidates the foundation and specialty including GP standards for training, and incorporates the standards for PGMEs. There is now one set of standards for all postgraduate medical education and training, from the Foundation Programme to the award of a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT), published in one document, The Trainee Doctor (pdf).

## Links

### Subspecialties

Severn School of Psychiatry offers advanced programmes in the six subspecialties of psychiatry: general adult, old age, learning disability, child and adolescent, forensic and psychotherapy. Endorsements are available in rehabilitation, addictions and liaison.

There is scope within the scheme to allow flexibility to tailor programmes to trainees' needs. General adult trainees may take a different specialist job (such as psychotherapy) for one of the three years of the scheme, or pursue a clinical interest away from their main subspecialty on a special interest day.

Severn School of Psychiatry is one of the few PGMEs to continue to offer senior trainees both a research day and a special interest day: this has allowed trainees recently to pursue substantial additional training opportunities, for example a masters in law or a masters of education.

Some of the specialties offer opportunities to work for periods of time outside Severn: for example forensic trainees may take a placement at one of the high secure hospitals.

Severn School of Psychiatry supports dual training, where specialising in an area of practice within which the knowledge and competencies associated with acquisition of a CCT in more than one recognised speciality would be essential. Good examples of this would be consultant posts in forensic psychotherapy or child and adolescent forensic psychiatry.

For more details on regulations on specialty training (including dual training) see the Gold Guide.

**[www.specialitytraining.hee.nhs.uk/news/the-gold-guide](http://www.specialitytraining.hee.nhs.uk/news/the-gold-guide)**

