Key starting points
Always start by checking with your preferred course provider to ascertain how much and what sort of experience they look for in an applicant. This can vary slightly from course to course. As a first step consult their entry in the Clearing House handbook at www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp. Entries set out what each course’s selection criteria are and may give you some idea regarding the experience courses look for. If you have further queries contact the course provider directly but bear in mind that they have to deal with lots of selection enquiries.

Admissions tutors recommend a balance between:
- Research experience
- Clinical experience
- Liaison and contact with a Clinical Psychologist

Once you have established the sort of work you’re looking for, try the following websites for vacancies. It’s worth checking regularly as vacancies are likely to change from day to day.

Things to consider
- Quality rather than quantity is key – don’t need extraordinary amounts (e.g. UCL at least 1 year is required)
- What sort of clients are you working with? Is it full-time or part-time and if latter are you getting enough exposure to clients?
- Is it in an appropriate setting for CP e.g. hospitals, day care centre, multi-professional teams?
- Is your work being supervised by a CP?
- Is it too specific to give you the breadth of exposure realistic to CP work?
- Is it too general and deals with working with ‘normal’ clients in ‘normal’ settings?
- Is it only working with one individual and, if so, is it varied enough to be realistic for CP work?

Sources of potentially relevant vacancies
Psychology specific sites
- British Psychological Society’s Appointments Memorandum www.appmemo.co.uk – assistant psychologist roles are advertised here, but you need to join BPS for access.
- www.psychminded.co.uk – lists vacancies for those working in psychology, psychiatry and mental health, including assistant psychologist, support/care and research studentship posts.
- www.clinpsy.org.uk – a site entirely aimed at those keen to enter clinical psychology; lots of advice on relevant experience and courses.
- www.psyclick.org.uk – very comprehensive unofficial website provided by Trainee CP with information on discussion groups, courses, interviews, vacancies and links.

Jobs in the NHS
- www.jobs.nhs.uk – official NHS job listing e.g. jobs in hospitals, clinics
- Mental Health Trusts – Identify support services and centres operated by your local Mental Health Trust, by choosing an area at http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/pages/mentalhealthtrustlisting.aspx Try making speculative approaches for work experience with services which interest you.
Research roles in academic institutions (ensure these are clinically relevant)

- www.jobs.ac.uk
- www.prospects.ac.uk/search_courses.htm
- www.findaphd.com
- http://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk
- Key aspect is that the research has clinical relevance
- Is the research going to expose you to clinical scenarios, issues and techniques, such as client interviews?
- Could you include research as part of an Assistant Psychologist role, such as a clinical audit?

Local Government

- www.lgjobs.co.uk – local government jobs including care and social work

Healthcare recruitment sites

- www.nhsjobs.com
- www.healthjobsuk.com
- www.mentalhealthjobs.co.uk

Charities (including mental health charities)

- www.charityjob.co.uk
- www.jobsincharities.co.uk
- See also the websites of the larger mental health and social care charities, such as Sane www.sane.org.uk, Mind www.mind.org.uk and the Mental Health Foundation www.mentalhealth.org.uk. For others search the charity directory at www.charitychoice.co.uk

Liaison and contact with a Clinical Psychologist

- Try speculative approaches to local psychologists with a view to gaining either work experience or information gathering to build your understanding of the role. Identify psychologists in your area by using your own network or by searching a phone directory. The BPS appointments memorandum is also a useful resource for identifying services which might be able to offer the sort of experience you are looking for www.appmemo.co.uk.

- Liaison can be direct or indirect

- Have you made the effort to generate and sustain contacts with practising CPs?

- Remember it’s the quality of the interpretation of the experience, and how that is conveyed on the application form/interview which is as important as the experience itself.

Assistant Psychologist posts

- If you can find one, then certainly a good idea to take one.
- BUT, not the only way to get valuable experience.
- Also try: Nursing Assistant roles, Care Assistant roles, Support roles in Social Security Departments and Care Homes, Clinical research assistant posts or Clinical research PhD posts AND supplement all these with visits/links/liaison with CPs.

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