

# **Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) Practitioner Training**

**2026 - 2028  
(Intake 11)**

## **Prospectus**

Information for all prospective trainees  
(including NHS England North East & Yorkshire pathway,  
and standard pathway)

Provided By  
**CAT Service**  
**Centre for Specialist Psychological Therapies**  
**Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear**  
**NHS Foundation Trust**

Accredited By  
**ACAT - Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy**

## About Cognitive Analytic Therapy

Cognitive Analytic Therapy is an integrative and time-limited approach to psychological therapy which is fast-growing in the NHS. It is a collaborative programme for looking at the way a person thinks, feels and acts, and the events and relationships that underlie these experiences. As its name suggests, it brings together ideas and understanding from different therapies into one user-friendly and effective treatment, tailored to a person's individual needs and goals for change. At its heart is an empathic relationship between the client and therapist, the purpose of which is to help the client make sense of their situation and to find ways of making changes for the better. Since the 1970s it has been developed to treat and manage NHS clients with a wide variety of mental health, interpersonal and relationship problems (including those which may have attracted a label of "personality disorder"). There is growing demand for training in CAT from nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists and counsellors, as well as from other health and social care professionals dealing with people with complex problems (including in primary care, physical health, and specialist mental health settings). Increasingly CAT is used as a consultation tool to help teams and individuals work more successfully in delivering effective routine care to clients. For more information on CAT, go to <https://acat.org.uk/>

## Practitioner Training in Cognitive Analytic Therapy

CAT Practitioner Training is a two-year in-service training, leading to accreditation with and full membership of the Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (ACAT) as a CAT Practitioner. This is a Psychological Therapist level qualification. Our training programme enables staff already qualified in a core caring profession or with psychological therapy experience to enhance their understanding and skills in psychotherapy by learning the theory and methods of Cognitive Analytic Therapy. The Newcastle Practitioner Training in CAT (hosted by CNTW) has run since 2004, successfully training staff in CAT across clinical specialties, from different multidisciplinary backgrounds, inside and outside the trust. **The projected start date for the course is January 2026.**

## Pathways to CAT Practitioner Training

The Newcastle CAT Training runs a single annual cohort for those on the **NHS England pathway** (where funding is centrally provided, as described later), and those funded through traditional routes (we call this the "**standard pathway**"). The training is the same for both pathways, with some minor differences in course requirements.

NHS England funding is designed to support the expansion of psychological therapies for severe mental health problems in adult community services and is *specifically for staff in community services working with adults (including older people) with people with complex relational problems* and adverse childhood experience, who would be likely to meet criteria for a diagnosis of "Borderline Personality Disorder" or "Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD)".

Standard pathway applicants may typically apply from other services - including (but not limited to) child and adolescent, inpatient, health psychology, learning disability and forensic services.

## The CAT practitioner 'graduate'

Successful study on the course will equip you as a trainee with a range of CAT skills, including assessment skills, therapeutic skills using the CAT model and its tools. Although you work with clients with complex needs for which CAT is particularly helpful, the training is designed in such a way to equip you with the ability to flexibly use CAT with clients with a range of presenting difficulties, and in the wider context within which they are seen.

The course aims to provide you with a broad understanding of the theoretical and therapeutic contributions and challenges provided by other therapeutic approaches, and with a growing ability to engage in communication and debate of these issues. You will be taught the basic tenets and value of evidence-based practice, evaluation/audit and research literacy.

You will be given an opportunity within a collaborative framework to develop your capacity for self-reflection as an individual and a therapist, which should contribute to an increased ability to handle uncertainty and conflict. This will include an enhanced understanding of personal motivations and 'procedures' that may draw you as an individual to therapeutic work, and the impact this and possible personal agendas and positive qualities could have on the therapeutic relationship.

The aim is for you to have developed a sound sense of yourself as a professional CAT therapist by the end of the training. This will include the demonstration of a collaborative stance and of an ability to operate within a person's 'zone of proximal development', of self-reflective practice and the maintenance of a critical faculty. It will also involve being able to take personal responsibility for the ethical practice of CAT, for the practical and sustainable management of a CAT workload and for individual Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

## **Program Structure**

The training programme, spaced across two years, consists of

- training days
- seminar reading groups,
- supervised clinical work
- assignments, and
- a personal CAT therapy

## **Training Days**

There will be 10 training days per year (monthly, with a summer break), which aim to familiarise trainees with the theory and practice of CAT, and covering the following themes:

### **1. Basics of CAT Theory & Practice**

- CAT concepts, including Reciprocal Role relationships and Procedural Sequences as tools for understanding experiences and problems;
- The practice of CAT including assessment, reformulation with letters and diagrams, managing time and endings, and facilitating therapeutic change;
- CAT's integration of psychotherapy theories, including object relations, intersubjectivity, attachment and modern developmental psychology, cognitive contributions, and personality development;
- Issues common to all psychotherapies within the CAT context, including management of boundaries, psychotherapy research and integration

### **2. Deepening CAT Theory & Practice**

- The use of the therapeutic relationship including transference & countertransference
- Modern CAT theory incl. the Zone of Proximal Development and dialogical CAT
- Working with complexity

### **3. Specialist Applications and Topics**

- Complex trauma, "personality difficulties", emotional instability and shame
- CAT, diversity and difference

- CAT in relation to creativity, neuroscience and embodied approaches to therapy
- Socially informed practice, CAT research, CAT consultancy
- CAT with specific groups including forensic settings, older people, eating disorders, physical health, psychosis and primary care

The training days are designed to fit with the other elements of the course – in particular supervised clinical work – to enable trainees to learn the practice of CAT and gain competence to practitioner level by the completion of the course; and to fit with course assignments to gain the theoretical understanding needed to underpin competent practice in CAT. Training days use a mix of methods with a focus on learning through dialogue within the group, including presentation, experiential exercises, case examples, video and role play. Personal reflection on the task of learning is a focus of the training days, in keeping with the CAT model's focus on the use of the self.

## Training Day Dates

All training days run on Thursdays between 10.00am and 4.30pm, at Walkergate Park Hospital, Benfield Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4QD. Training dates will be confirmed near the start of the course but we expect the first training day to be **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026**. Training days are normally the first Thursday of each month (with some adjustments e.g. for public holidays).

## Training Team

The core training team is based at the CNTW CAT Service, part of the Centre for Specialist Psychological Therapies based at Benfield House, Walkergate Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and includes:

- **Dr Pam Jameson** (Counselling Psychologist) is Course Director, and ACAT-accredited CAT Psychotherapist and Supervisor.
- **Dr Steve Jefferis** (Consultant Clinical Psychologist) is CAT Training Lead for CNTW, Clinical Lead for the CAT Service, and ACAT-accredited CAT Practitioner and Supervisor.
- **Jak Smith** (Psychological Therapist) is a course trainer and ACAT-accredited CAT Practitioner and Supervisor.
- **Dr Jennie Larsson** (Clinical Psychologist) is a course trainer and ACAT-accredited CAT Practitioner and Supervisor.
- **Dr Stephanie Simpson** (Clinical Psychologist) is a course trainer and ACAT-accredited CAT Practitioner, Supervisor, and Psychotherapist in training.

**Angela Reay** is our Course Administrator. The core team is augmented by others from the network of CAT practitioners in the North East, who provide training, supervision and academic support to the programme. Some training days, especially in year 2, will include invited local and national speakers with expertise in specialist applications of CAT.

## Supervised Clinical Work

Trainees undertake formal CAT therapy with (usually\*) a minimum of 8 clients under the clinical supervision of an ACAT-accredited Supervisor. Supervision takes place weekly, usually for one-and-a-half hours in groups of 3 trainees. There will be a minimum of 40 supervision groups per year. Trainees are required to be in accredited CAT supervision until the completion of all clinical work. This will normally take a minimum of two years, and may take longer for some trainees, depending on availability of suitable clients. Trainees are expected to gain experience with a diverse group of clients during training, including working in the latter part of the training with clients with more complex difficulties. Trainees discuss the diversity of the training caseload with their CAT supervisor, and may be required to see two cases from outside their employing service (e.g. general adult mental health clients) if they work in a specialist setting. The usual

recommended pattern for accreditation is six 16 session cases, one 24 session case and one 8 session CAT. \*For NHS England funded trainees where the course is specifically for trainees working with clients with severe and complex mental health problems associated with a diagnosis of 'personality disorder' an alternative case mix is accepted for accreditation. For this client group 24 session CAT is the recommended and evidence-based intervention, so a higher number of your training cases are likely to be 24 sessions in length (rather than the 16 session model for other difficulties). Trainees can therefore meet the accepted minimum clinical hours by seeing six 24 session cases, by agreement with the supervisor and course director.

You will be expected to remain in supervision until the completion of all clinical work, which will normally take a minimum of two years. In order to reach this goal you need to start seeing clients shortly after the start of the course and to carry two clients concurrently at any given time.

Supervisors need to be ACAT accredited supervisors. You may be able to access CAT supervision in your workplace, or you may be aware of local CAT supervisors who may be willing to offer trainee supervision. The course can advise on supervision, and agree with you the most suitable options. Supervision is ideally in person but a proportion can be conducted remotely, usually in the second year (with an advisory minimum of 50% in-person supervision).

For many trainees the supervised clinical practice requirements to see 8 clients for CAT can take more than two years. This reflects a variety of factors including access to suitable training cases, client drop-outs and work place issues. Trainees are encouraged to plan as effectively as possible to increase the likelihood that they can complete close to two years, by for example ensuring that any necessary arrangements to set up service contracts occur ahead of the course start date, identifying suitable training cases for the start of the course and identifying suitable clients consistently throughout the two years. For NHS England funded trainees, the sponsoring NHS Trust would be responsible for funding or providing supervision extending beyond the two years.

## **Seminar Reading Groups**

Trainees will be required to set up seminar reading groups of between 3 and 6 participants, meeting for at least 16 hours per year of the course. Trainees take responsibility for leading discussion around a chosen paper. The aim is to encourage trainees to take an active approach to their own learning needs and to identify gaps in their knowledge which their own activity can meet. Course trainers will help with arrangements, provide the reading material and guidelines to assist study, and each group will link up with a local CAT practitioner who will offer additional guidance and facilitation of the seminar group on a few occasions during the course. Seminar groups can take place on line.

## **Personal Therapy**

Those undertaking training in psychotherapy make a commitment to personal development in order to better understand their own reciprocal roles and procedures so that these are not enacted unhelpfully with clients or on the course. Personal therapy is considered an essential part of the process of becoming a CAT practitioner in order to empathically understand the challenges of receiving a CAT therapy as well as delivering it. Trainees are therefore required to undertake at minimum a 16 session, weekly CAT plus follow up during the course. You are strongly encouraged to undertake it, or at a minimum to have set it up, before the end of the first year of the course. Most trainees find it an invaluable experience, which invariably deepens the understanding of the process and application of CAT.



A list of ACAT accredited CAT therapists is available on the ACAT website and some courses provide additional lists of therapists willing to offer training therapies. The confidentiality of the personal therapy will be respected and this aspect of the training is not assessed.

For the personal therapy you choose your own ACAT accredited therapist and the course needs only know that the therapy was completed. NHS England trainees have allocated funding for the personal therapy up to £80 per session, paid directly to your therapist once you have organised your therapy. Any shortfall between the funding provided by the training programme and the total cost of your therapy would be your responsibility to meet. For those on the standard pathway (i.e. not NHS England funded), CAT personal training therapy is normally funded by the trainee themselves as a private arrangement. If your course fees are being funded by your employer you may wish to negotiate the inclusion of personal therapy fees in that arrangement (which happens independently of the course). Fees vary by therapist; 16 sessions + follow up at £80 per hour equates to £1360, as a guide.

## **Assessment and Assignments**

Trainees' progress is assessed via:

- Two essays (on reformulation, and on the application of CAT concepts in clinical practice)
- Two case studies, the first accompanied by an audio recording of a clinical session (protocol for the 2<sup>nd</sup> case study assignment will be confirmed at the start of the course)
- Clinical appraisal reports, submitted jointly by clinical supervisors and trainees, at six monthly intervals.

Trainees must attend a minimum of 85% of each element of the course to reach accreditation.

## **Award and ACAT Accreditation**

The ACAT Practitioner award is equivalent to a Postgraduate Diploma. ACAT Practitioner trainings are accepted by the Department of Health as meeting the standards for the training of Psychological Therapists in the NHS.

After accruing further accredited CAT therapy cases, course graduates are eligible to apply to the two advanced training courses in CAT: the CAT Psychotherapy Training (IRRAPT, leading to UKCP registration as a CAT Psychotherapist), and CAT Supervisor Training (also offered via the CNTW CAT Service). All CAT Practitioner training programmes are accredited and moderated by the Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (ACAT).

## **Admission Criteria (as a guide only)**

- A qualification in an NHS recognised mental health core profession (mental health nursing, clinical psychology, counselling psychology, forensic psychology, psychiatry, occupational therapy, social work, psychological therapy including high intensity IAPT, art / drama / music therapy, or counselling to ScoPEd B Practitioner level).
- At least one and normally two years of post-qualification experience
  - NHS England applicants will have a minimum of twelve months experience of working with clients who meet criteria for a diagnosis of 'personality disorder', through which applicants will be expected to have acquired the UCL core competences for work with individuals with personality disorder.
- Experience of practice in formal psychological therapy/interventions, or counselling (usually at least half a day per week for a minimum of one year). This normally means experience of working with people in a mental health setting within psychotherapeutic boundaries.
- Basic understanding of the CAT model. Attendance at a 2 day introductory workshop is strongly advised.

- Regular access to clients suitable for CAT in the workplace, or arrangements to access training cases elsewhere
- Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they are academically capable of undertaking postgraduate study, having either a first degree or equivalent qualification, or other assessed evidence of equivalent academic capability.
- Applicants must have personal qualities that make them suitable for the profession of psychotherapy and have sufficient emotional competence to deal with the psychological aspects of the work. These qualities will normally include a lively and enquiring mind, an ability to listen and respond with compassion and respect and without prejudice, evidence of self-reflection, self-awareness and a commitment to self-development. Applicants should demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, ethnic and cultural difference.

## Funding, Costs and application requirements.

**Managerial support.** All applicants require full support for the course from their current manager, from whom we ask for a reference. Applicants should be aware of and confirm, along with their sponsoring manager, that they and their service are able to commit to all components of the training, including up to two days per week to deliver CAT therapy during and after completion of training. It is extremely helpful to have a working agreement with your manager on undertaking the course, to ensure all parties are clear about the requirements to complete the course. This also applies if you move posts while training. The agreement relates in particular to the time available to attend training days and supervision; and support to access appropriate training cases in a timely way. We supply a suggested working agreement for managers and you will be required to supply a signed copy before starting the course. NHS England pathway applicants need support from their Trust Psychological Professions Lead (or delegated manager for NHS England funded training places) to apply.

**For NHS England applicants,** costs are centrally funded and so no charges apply within the two years of the taught course. We accept applicants from Trusts within the NHS England North East and Yorkshire region – [check the map here](#). Completing the course involves attending a total of 20 monthly training days face to face in Newcastle. All the NHS England funded places for CAT training in this region are for the Newcastle course, but those from the southern part of the region wanting to training in CAT through traditional (non-NHS England) funding routes may prefer to apply for the [Manchester course](#) for travel reasons.

**For CNTW Trust applicants,** you may apply via either the NHS England route or the standard pathway route, depending on the service you work in. Please contact the course if you need advice about which pathway to apply for. For CNTW staff applying via the standard pathway, there are a limited number of funded places on the course so there will not normally be additional costs to undertake the training. Standard pathway CNTW applicants are liable for personal therapy fees (see “Personal Therapy” section above).

**For “standard pathway” applicants from outside of CNTW Trust, the following costs apply.**

- Application & Interview fee £50.
- Academic training and training days: £2600 p.a.
- Supervision fees (if required from CNTW CAT Service Supervisors): £1400 p.a. *Non-CNTW standard pathway trainees may arrange their own accredited supervision in their own Trust if available.*
- Total cost over two years (incl supervision, excluding personal therapy fees): £8050

## Making An Application

To make an application, submit a completed application form, available [via the ACAT website](#). This includes the following information:

1. **Current employment details**, including your likely **source of clients**
2. Contact details for two referees (your current manager, and your clinical supervisor, or another professional who knows your recent clinical work well)
3. Details of your professional/work/qualification history
4. A **personal supporting statement** of around 750 words indicating:
  - a) Your current therapeutic approach
  - b) What you hope to gain from training in CAT
  - c) Why it is important for psychotherapists to develop an understanding of their own emotional life
5. One **case summary** of around 500 words (not required to be a CAT case)
6. Details of **who to invoice** regarding application and interview fees.

**The application window is open now and closes on 31 August 2025.** If you are unable to meet the deadline please contact us. Please submit applications, by email only, to [CSPTtraining@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:CSPTtraining@cntw.nhs.uk).

All CAT training aims to conduct itself with an awareness of the importance of respect for difference in society, whether this is in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, ethnic or cultural difference. All trainees will be expected to approach their learning, as well as their fellow trainees, course contributors and clients from this perspective. **We particularly welcome applications from members of groups currently under-represented in the psychotherapy profession.**

## Interviews

Short-listed applicants will then be invited for an interview. The interview has a number of functions:

- To hear about your interest in CAT, and experiences of it so far
- To give you a chance to ask us about the course and any queries you have
- To clarify whether the necessary arrangements are in place, e.g. managerial support, funding, source of clients
- To give you the opportunity to expand on what you have told us in your application, including your case description
- To hear your reflections on your work and the prospect of being a CAT practitioner in training, in order to assess the “fit” between your practice and the course at this point in time.

**Interviews are scheduled to take place on Sep 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> and Oct 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>.**

Please get in touch if you have any queries via the contact details below:

CNTW CAT Service,

Centre for Specialist Psychological Therapies,

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Benfield House, Walkergate Park, Benfield Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4PF

Tel: 0191 287 6100 – Fax: 0191 287 6101 – Email: [CSPTtraining@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:CSPTtraining@cntw.nhs.uk)