

# DR NICOLA O'DONNELL

Chartered Health Psychologist and Post-Doctoral Research Associate

*BSc (Hons), PGCert., MSc, CPsychol., PhD*

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## EDUCATION

### 2021-2024

PhD Health Sciences, University of York

My PhD sat within the Department of Health Sciences and the Epidemiology and Cancer Statistics Group at York. It focused on generating evidence to inform a novel psychoeducation intervention for young people who have had Retinoblastoma. My PhD comprised of three studies; Reflexive thematic analysis utilising semi-structured interviews and focus groups, a systematic review and narrative analysis, and a content analysis.

### 2022-2024

Health Psychology Professional Doctorate, The British Psychological Society

The British Psychological Society (BPS) stage 2 in Health Psychology is a professional doctorate-level qualification. This independent training requires a minimum of 2-years full-time practice and the submission of a portfolio. Including a total of 200 clinical hours; six month placement at the internationally renowned INPUT Pain Management Unit at St Thomas' Hospital in London, six month placement at East Midlands Cancer Alliance NHS Integrated Videotherapy Service, six month placement in Bariatric Surgery at Greenwich and Lewisham NHS trust.

### 2020-2021

MSc Health Psychology - Distinction  
University College London

Stage 1 of the BPS health psychology doctoral training. I carried out a research project later published in British Journal of Health Psychology, entitled 'Knowing that I had HPV, I literally just shut down': A qualitative exploration of virus beliefs and the behavioural impact of COVID-19 in women with mental health conditions testing positive for Human Papillomavirus (HPV)'.

### 2016-2017

PGCert. Low Intensity Psychological Interventions for Children and Young People - Merit  
University of Sussex

A postgraduate therapeutic skills training course providing a core understanding in Cognitive Behavioural approaches to psychological difficulties including anxiety and low mood.

### 2012-2016

BSc (Hons) Applied Psychology with Clinical Psychology - First Class Honours  
University of Kent

Including a one-year placement in Child Health and Paediatrics. I completed two research dissertations, one of which was presented at UCL's Neurodevelopmental Seminar Series, 2016.

# EMPLOYMENT - RESEARCH

## 2024-PRESENT

### Research Associate, University of York

Post-doctoral research associate in the paediatric palliative care research group. Researcher on projects such as End of Life Care for Infants, Children and Young People: a mixed methods evaluation of current practice in the United Kingdom (ENHANCE).

## 2023-2024

### Research Assistant, Leeds Beckett University

Research assistant on an NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) funded study on fertility preservation and decision-making in young males with cancer. Undertaking systematic reviews, preparing and submitting NHS ethics applications, and supporting with the development and writing of a patient decision aid.

## 2023

### Visiting Lecturer, Kings College London

Guest lecturing on the MSc Health Psychology qualification, notably on the 'psychosocial factors in health and illness' module.

## 2023

### Research Assistant, University of York

Research assistant within the Epidemiology and Cancer Statistics Group in the Health Science Department. Specialising in qualitative methodology and Patient and Public Involvement (PPI). Included supervision of an MSc student in public health.

## 2020-2023

### Research Assistant, University of Surrey

Research assistant on a Diabetes UK funded feasibility trial, designing a novel parenting intervention to prevent disordered eating in children and young people with Type 1 Diabetes. Co-design, development and evaluation of intervention including facilitating the intervention across multiple-sites UK-wide.

## 2020-2021

### Research Assistant, CLASS, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Trust

NHS Research assistant for Professor Simon Baron-Cohen on a national project to improve autism assessment for adults. Responsible for all data collection for the Cambridge site, pre-screening and recruiting participants. Qualitative interviewing and psychometric administration.

## 2015 - 2016

### Research Assistant, Child Development Unit, University of Kent

Interviewing parents, siblings, and young people, most often with diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). Administering psychometric tests such as WASI-II, NEPSY-II and CELF-5 to children and young people up to age 18 years. Direct assessment and experimental work whilst adhering to a complex procedure with a semi-structured script. Recruiting participants from schools and community groups, including giving presentations to engage parents and staff about the benefits of being involved in research.

# ADDITIONAL POSTS

### Trainee Lead and Chair - Division of Health Psychology, British Psychological Society, 2023-2024

I was elected as trainee lead for the Division of Health Psychology in June 2023. My role involved supporting and advocating for health psychology trainees in the UK. I acted as a point of contact for any trainee queries, as well as running the trainee network 'conversation cafes' and being involved in the Qualification in Health Psychology stakeholder group. I also chaired the Health Psychology Trainee Network.

### Peer Reviewer - British Journal of Health Psychology, JAMA Network Open, BMJ Archives of Diseases in Childhood

In 2022 I was invited to act as a peer reviewer based upon my skills working qualitatively within health psychology research.

### Social Media Committee, Young SIOP Network - International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP)

Representing the interests of young researchers within paediatric oncology. Member of the social media committee, sourcing and creating content for SIOP social media platforms.

# EMPLOYMENT - CLINICAL

## 2025- PRESENT

Practitioner Health Psychologist, Paediatrics, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

## 2024-2025

Practitioner Health Psychologist, Medicine Psychology, Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

Working in the department of medicine psychology, I provide assessment and formulation and deliver psychological interventions to adults with varied long-term health conditions, including (but not limited to) diabetes, cardiovascular, dermatological, gastrointestinal and gynaecological conditions. I also provide teaching, training, and support to allied health professionals, families and carers.

## 2023 -2024

Trainee Health Psychologist, Bariatric Surgery, Greenwich and Lewisham NHS Trust

Six month clinical placement within the NHS Bariatric Surgery service. Holding a clinical caseload of adults pre and post weight loss surgery. Drawing on multiple approaches to support individuals with behaviour change interventions.

## 2022-2023

Trainee Health Psychologist, EMCAVS, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Six month clinical placement within the East Midlands Cancer Videotherapy Service (EMCAVS), situated in the East Midlands Cancer Alliance. Holding a clinical caseload of adults across the lifespan, all of whom were undergoing investigation for or were in treatment for any cancers, or for individuals in remission. Using ACT, Compassion Focused (CFT), and CBT approaches.

## 2022

Trainee Health Psychologist, INPUT Pain Management, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Six month clinical placement at the internationally renowned INPUT Pain Management Unit at St Thomas' Hospital, London. Holding a clinical caseload of adults with varying chronic pain conditions, including vestibular migraine, complex regional pain, pelvic pain, and chronic pain after accident or injury. Utilising Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) in 12-week intervention sessions. Supporting residential pain management group interventions drawing on an ACT approach. Working as part of a multi-disciplinary team to assess and formulate complex presentations.

## 2018-2020

Low-Intensity Therapist, CAMHS, North East London NHS Foundation Trust

Holding a clinical caseload under 'mood and anxiety' and 'complex' pathways. Delivering CBT and Narrative interventions under the CYP-IAPT agenda. Providing consultation on eating difficulties. Administering psychometric measures. Regularly completing audit and service evaluation.

## 2018

Assistant Psychologist, All Age Eating Disorders' Service, North East London NHS Foundation Trust

Co-facilitating DBT group for Bulimia in adults and support group for parents/carers of young people. Using narrative and CBT approaches in face-to-face and digitalised therapeutic work with individuals on my case load. Including working with young people and adults with Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. I spent lots of time linking with schools to provide early-intervention support – addressing a wide-range of audiences from health care and public health professionals, head teachers and school children.

# EMPLOYMENT - CLINICAL

## **2017-2018**

**Assistant Psychologist, CAMHS, North East London NHS Foundation Trust**

Lead for patient participation under the CYP-IAPT agenda – ensuring that service users' voices influence and develop services to reflect their needs. Aiding diagnostic assessments and treatment, including being part of the reflective team in multi-family therapy. Compiling patient histories, attending complex case discussion and assisting with the compilation of reports.

## **2016-2017**

**Assistant Psychologist, CAMHS, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**

Co-facilitating STEPPS and DBT groups for young people with emotional dysregulatory difficulties. Independently (under supervision from a clinical psychologist) administering and scoring psychometric assessment e.g. the WISC and WAIS. Implementing and analysing Routine Outcome Measures.

## **2014-2015**

**Assistant Psychologist, Child Health and Paediatrics, East Kent University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Undergraduate placement year. Supporting autism diagnostic interviews, typically using ADOS and DISCO measures. Co-facilitating an ASC sibling support group and conducting an audit of this. Conducted a research project entitled 'Is my child naughty or autistic? An investigation into whether knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder affects parents' attributions of their child's challenging behaviour', for which I gained NHS ethical approval and a first-class grade.

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Roleston, C., Protudjer, J.L.P., Herbert, L.J., Jones, C.J., Warren, C., Brough, H.A., Miah, M., **O'Donnell, N.**, Omar, H., Ennifer, W., Marchisotto, M.J., & Knibb, R. (2026). The healthcare experiences and psychological support needs of adults and caregivers managing food allergy. *Journal of Health Psychology*.

**O'Donnell, N.**, Noret, N., & Phillips, B. (In press). "Words Stick with You": The Lasting Impact of Bullying on Retinoblastoma Survivors.

Williamson, M., Folan, A.M., Jones, G.L., Eldred L., **O'Donnell N.**, Gough B., Pacey A., Phillips B., Yeomanson D., Lane S., Porteous C., Anderson R., & Mitchell R. (in press). Experiences of decision making for fertility preservation in adolescent males with cancer: a systematic review.

Jones, G.L., Musson, D.S., **O'Donnell N.**, Folan, A.M., Gough B., Pacey A., Phillips B., Williamson, M., D., Lane S., Porteous C., Anderson R., & Mitchell R. (2025). The development and evaluation of the first fertility preservation patient decision aid to support young males with cancer: the Cancer, Fertility and Me young males research protocol. *BMJ Open*. 10.1136/bmjopen-2025-104475

Wakelin, K.E., Read, R. K., Williams, A.Y., Francois-Walcott, R.R., **O'Donnell, N.**, Satherley, R-M., Harrington, M.P., John, M., & Jones, C.J. (2025). The effectiveness of psychological interventions for families of children with Type 1 Diabetes on caregiver and child functioning: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Diabetes*.

**O'Donnell, N.**, Howell, D., Morgan, J.E., & Phillips, B. (2025). "That's all anyone needs really, support": A content analysis of retinoblastoma survivors' psychosocial support needs. *Pediatric Blood & Cancer*.

**O'Donnell, N.**, Ellis, L., Morgan, J.E., Howell, D., Axél Gregersen, P., Willard, V., & Phillips, B. (2025). Psychosocial interventions to improve wellbeing in teenage and young adult post- treatment survivors of childhood cancer: a systematic review. *Psycho-Oncology*.

Roleston, C., Protudjer, J.L.P., Herbert, L.J., Jones, C.J., Warren, C., Brough, H.A., Miah, M., **O'Donnell, N.**, Marchisotto, M.J., & Knibb, R. (2025). "It's a permanent struggle to manage it really": Psychological burden and coping strategies of adults living with food allergy. *Qualitative Health Research*.

**O'Donnell, N.**, Phillips, B., Morgan, J., & Howell, J. (2024). "It's not meant to be for life, but it carries on": A qualitative investigation into the psychosocial needs of young Retinoblastoma survivors. *BMJ Open*. 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-082779

Jones, C.J., Read, R., **O'Donnell, N.**, Wakelin, K., John, M., Skene, S.S., Stewart, R., Hale, L., Cooke, D., Kanumakala, S., & Satherley, R-M. (2023). PRIORITY Trial: Results from a feasibility randomised controlled trial of a psychoeducational intervention for parents to prevent disordered eating in children and young people with Type 1 Diabetes. *Diabetic Medicine*. 10.1111/dme.15263

Harrington, M.P., Satherley, R-M., John, M., **O'Donnell, N.**, Read, R., Wakelin, K., & Jones, C.J. (2023). Reliability and validity of a parent-reported screening tool for disordered eating in adolescents with Type 1 diabetes. *Diabetic Medicine*. 10.1111/dme.15256

**O'Donnell, N.**, Waller, J., Marlow, L., Anderson, N.C., & McBride, E. (2023). "Knowing that I had HPV, I literally just shut down": a qualitative exploration of the psychosocial impact of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) in women living with mental health conditions. *British Journal of Health Psychology*. 10.1111/bjhp.12688

Wakelin, K., Read, R., **O'Donnell, N.**, Baker, M., Satherley, R-M., Stewart, R., & Jones, C. (2023). Integrating conversations about disordered eating in children and young people into routine type one diabetes care: a practical guide for paediatric diabetes teams. *Practical Diabetes*. 10.1002/pdi.2464

**O'Donnell, N.**, Satherley, R-M., Davey, E., & Bryan, G. (2023). Fraudulent participants in qualitative child health research: identifying and reducing bot activity. *Archives of Diseases in Childhood*. 10.1136/archdischild-2022-325049

Zinser, J., **O'Donnell, N.**, Hale, L., & Jones, C. J. (2022). Multi-family therapy for eating disorders across the lifespan: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Eating Disorders Review*, 1- 23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/erv.2919>

**O'Donnell N.R.**, Satherley R-M, John M, Cooke D, Hale LS, Stewart R and Jones CJ (2022). Development and Theoretical Underpinnings of the PRIORITY Intervention: A Parenting Intervention to Prevent Disordered Eating in Children and Young People With Type 1 Diabetes. *Front. Clin. Diabetes Healthc*. 3:822233. 10.3389/fcdhc.2022.822233

Jones, C. J., **O'Donnell, N.**, John, M., Cooke, D., Stewart, R., Hale, L., Skene, S. S., Kanumakala, S., Harrington, M., & Satherley, R-M. (2021). PaRent InterventiOn to pRevent dsordered eating in children with TYpe 1 diabetes (PRIORITY): Study protocol for a feasibility randomised controlled trial. *Diabetic Medicine*, e14738. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/dme.14738>

# AWARDS AND BURSARIES

**2025 Excellence in Health Psychology Early Career Award, Division of Health Psychology, British Psychological Society**

**2025 William Inman Prize Winner, British Psychological Society**

**2025-2026 Grant awarded by the Childhood Eye Cancer Charity - £50,000**

**2025-2026 Grant awarded by OSCAR's Paediatric Brain Tumour Charity - £20,000**

**2024 3 Minute Thesis Prize winner - University of York** - Awarded third place from ten finalists for the York Vitae Three Minute Thesis®. A competition that challenges doctoral candidates to present a compelling spoken presentation on their research topic and its significance in just three minutes.

**2023 Future Leader Finalist, InsideOut Awards** - The InsideOut awards celebrate mental health and champion those making changes in this domain within their field.

**2023 PhD Spotlight Finalist - 4th place** - The University of York 'YorkTalks' event requires candidates to communicate their research to a non-specialist audience in the form of an interactive exhibition.

**2022 PsyPAG Masters Award** - The PsyPAG Masters Award recognises outstanding research in a Masters level research project.

**2022-2024 Cumberland Lodge Fellowship** - awarded one of nine highly competitive positions, identified as being a 'future leader and change-maker'.

**2021-2024 PhD Scholarship awarded by the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust - £73,799**

# INVITED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group Annual Meeting 2023** - poster presentation

**Division of Health Psychology Conference 2023** - oral presentation

**British Psychooncology Society Conference 2023** - oral presentation

**Children with Cancer UK Conference 2023** - poster presentations x2

**SIOP International Conference 2023** - poster presentation

**Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group Annual Meeting 2024** - poster presentation

**Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) International Conference 2024** - oral presentations x2

**SIOP International Conference 2024** - poster presentations x2

# PRESS RELEASES, MAINSTREAM AND UNCONVENTIONAL MEDIA REPORTS

Article in CCLG Connect -

Article in 'Optometry Today' - <https://www.aop.org.uk/ot/science-and-vision/research/2024/05/19/bullying-and-retinoblastoma-i-came-home-one-day-and-asked-whats-a-cyclops>

Article in 'Oncology News Today' - <https://oncologynewstoday.co.uk/bullying-significant-issue-for-young-people-in-aftermath-of-eye-cancer-study-shows/>

Podcast guest on 'The PaedsHub Pod', April 2024

Podcast guest on 'The Aspiring Psychologist', April 2024

CPD article and course written for 'Optician', August 2023. [cet.opticianonline.net/Course/Information?courseid=6630](http://cet.opticianonline.net/Course/Information?courseid=6630) / [flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=64e704aeb3ae8#19](https://flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=64e704aeb3ae8#19)

Article in 'Know The Glow', August 2023, <https://knowtheglow.org/exploring-the-psychological-impact-of-retinoblastoma-a-path-to-bespoke-interventions-for-young-people/?fbclid=IwAR0o8ArhLkjcBE5RhB2yXzG4nujcUDBgeqoTESQEn5Kw-wisJqrIVkdX5g0>

Podcast guest on 'Your Unique Vision', April 2023

Article in 'Optician', February 2023: <https://www.opticianonline.net/features/communicating-the-retinoblastoma-experience>

Article in 'Sightcare' January 2023: <https://www.sightcare.co.uk/uncategorized/retinoblastoma-phd-researcher-becomes-a-finalist-in-yorkstalks-competition%E2%80%AF/>

Article in 'Association of Dispensing Optics', January 2023: <https://www.abdo.org.uk/news/child-eye-cancer-researcher-reaches-finals/>

Article in 'Optometry Today', January 2023: <https://www.aop.org.uk/ot/industry/charity/2023/01/25/work-of-chedt-retinoblastoma-researcher-highlighted-in-university-of-york-phd-competition>

Article in 'Optician Online', January 2023: <https://www.opticianonline.net/content/features/communicating-the-retinoblastoma-experience/>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chartered member of the British Psychological society (membership no. 487876)

HCPC Registered (PYL044219)

Experienced consultant on health projects including in the fields of cancer, paediatrics, and type one diabetes

Further therapeutic training. including: Compassion Focused Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, DNA-V (Act for Youth), and Motivational Interviewing.

Good working knowledge of SPSS, Qualtrics, NVIVO, Rio, Carenotes, Systmone, Covidence, Zotero, Endnote, and Microsoft office

Full, current, clean DBS check

Good Clinical Practice trained (2023)

Trained in working in media production and providing psychological services to the media (2024)