



CARTER BROWN

**Dr Ruth B.
BSc (Hons), D. Clin. Psych, Dip. Cog. Ther.**

HCPC Registration No. xxxx DBS Registration No. xxxx

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERTISE

Professional Qualification

Chartered Clinical Psychologist

Areas of Expertise

- Assessment of adults to diagnose learning disability
- Assessments of adults with a learning disability:
 - Impact of learning disability on ability to parent
 - Identification and assessment of mental health problems and impact on parenting
 - Attachment history and effect on parenting
 - Ability to protect
 - Motivation and capacity to change
 - Motivation to engage with professionals
 - Ability to understand, retain and act on professional advice
 - Understanding of the concerns of the Local Authority
 - Capacity to instruct a solicitor
 - Capacity to consent to treatment; manage financial affairs and have sexual relationships
 - Features indicative of autistic spectrum disorders
- Assessment of neurotypical adults
 - I have expertise in assessing people who make up the interpersonal system around an adult with a learning disability and am able to assess all relevant areas as above

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

I have worked with people with a learning disability since 1992. I qualified as a Clinical Psychologist in 1996 and the majority of my subsequent work has been with this client group and the people who make up their social network (family members, partners, paid carers and so on). I am therefore very familiar with engaging and assessing both people with a learning disability and those without, with particular expertise in assessing the former. I worked in the National Health Service for approximately twelve years, initially supporting adults living in the community. During this time I was also a research therapist with the Leeds Depression Project, providing cognitive therapy to (neurotypical) adults with either depression alone or co-existing with personality disorder. I subsequently developed my assessment, formulation and treatment skills via a Diploma in Cognitive Therapy.

In my Consultant post, I was responsible for psychology provision to people with a learning disability and challenging behaviour and/or mental health problems. The bulk of my clinical work was in in-patient settings, often with detained patients and their carers. I have also worked in a medium secure private hospital and in a residential service for people with autistic spectrum conditions and complex needs. I started working in private practice in January 2011 and have been regularly undertaking psychological assessments for care proceedings since October 2011.

In carrying out my assessments for care proceedings I have drawn on and developed areas of expertise that I acquired in my various clinical roles. Regarding cognitive functioning, I have much clinical experience of assessing the level of a person's learning disability and considering the implications of this for their ability to carry out tasks of daily living. Similarly, I have much experience of using a person's cognitive profile (areas of strength and weakness) to make sense of areas where

they function better and worse in daily life and to identify strategies to support future learning. Understanding the relevance of a cognitive profile for a person's parenting ability is an extension of this area of expertise.

I have considerable experience of and expertise in, working clinically with people with a variety of problems that can make them difficult-to-reach. These problems include learning disability, autism, mental health problems, aversive life experiences and personality difficulties. My experience in establishing a good rapport with people who are typically difficult-to-reach allows for a more comprehensive assessment since the person is better engaged.

My clinical experience has sensitised me to the presence of mental health problems in people with a learning disability which often present in an atypical fashion and can therefore be easily overlooked. In carrying out court-requested assessments I am able to draw on an extensive knowledge and use of standardised mental health/emotional well-being inventories and interviews, adapting these where necessary.

I am very familiar with the life histories of people with a learning disability which frequently include abuse, neglect and little understanding of/attention to their emotional needs. This familiarity enables me to enquire sensitively about parents' personal histories; to be open to hearing their stories, and to use the information gained to make a better formulation about their parenting difficulties. This sensitivity applies equally to parents without a learning disability.

My work in a forensic service required me to develop my knowledge of personality disorders – this involved reading widely, attending relevant training (such as a workshop by Robert Hare concerning his Psychopathy Checklist) and using this knowledge to inform formulation and treatment. I have extended this knowledge by developing expertise in administration and interpretation of the International Personality Disorder Inventory and considering the implications of personality functioning for parenting.

The cases that I have undertaken in respect of care proceedings have had much in common with those that I assessed following admission to in-patient care in that both require a thorough review of existing documentation combined with an informed and comprehensive assessment of both the person and their context followed by a period of critical reflection and analysis to arrive at an objective formulation. I therefore have quite considerable experience of this process and am confident in my ability to make sense of very complex material. I have had positive judicial feedback on my reports which were described as rigorous, extensive and substantial.

In my NHS posts I undertook a number of assessments of capacity, latterly under the Mental Capacity Act (2005) legislation. These included assessments of capacity to consent to treatment, manage financial affairs and have sexual relationships. I am therefore familiar with the guiding principles for such assessments; of adhering to these principles in practice, and with the careful thought and multi-disciplinary involvement that is required when making decisions in very complex and emotive areas. In my private practice I have extended this expertise into the area of assessing capacity to conduct proceedings.

Working with adults with a learning disability and the interpersonal systems around them almost always needs to be multi-disciplinary to be effective. I am therefore highly experienced in being a member of a team and of maintaining professional autonomy whilst genuinely engaging in the work of the team. I am comfortable with stating a professional opinion which is open to being challenged and with either robustly defending an opinion or revising it as appropriate.

My diverse roles have all involved considerations of risk and vulnerability. I have considerable experience of carrying out such assessments and of considering factors that can exacerbate or minimise risks and vulnerabilities.

REPORTS

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I have prepared a number of reports for the Family Courts. These have covered the following areas of assessment:

- parents' cognitive functioning
- knowledge of the tasks of parenting
- understanding of concerns of the Local Authority
- capacity to change and engage with professionals
- capacity to understand, retain and act on professional advice
- capacity to instruct a solicitor
- personal history and its effects on the person
- attachment relationship between parents and children
- ability to protect (self and child)
- regulation of affect and implications for safe parenting

In addition to assessing parents, I have assessed and reported on other people in their interpersonal system. These assessments have included the following areas:

- ability to support the parent's care of a child (generally and in relation to specific risks and deficits in the parents' repertoire of skills and knowledge)
- ability to help the parent develop knowledge and skills
- likelihood of the parent accepting advice from an identified family member and of their working co-operatively
- understanding of the concerns of the Local Authority
- cognitive functioning of family members offering support

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING & RESEARCH

Bsc (Hons) Psychology - University of Manchester	1992
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology - University of Leeds	1996
Diploma in Cognitive Therapy - University of Salford	2003

I have attended a number of training events on the role of an expert witness and appearing in court including one day events with Andrew Andrews (Lawyer & Barrister) and Terry Walsh (Senior Partner in the Bradford firm of solicitors Chivers Walsh Smith and Irvine & Co).

I maintain my interest in issues pertinent to people with a learning disability via membership of professional email lists, attendance at a regional special interest group and reading relevant literature (such as the report on Winterbourne View). I attend specialist workshops to ensure up-to-date knowledge.

I continue to be interested in cognitive and cognitive behavioural approaches to therapy and read relevant literature alongside attending workshops (the most recent being a one-day introduction to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in February 2013).

I write on the subject of Intensive Interaction and read widely to support my views. This includes literature on the caregiver-infant relationship which informs my observations of contact sessions and opinions regarding the quality of attachment in family law work.

MEMBERSHIPS

Professional Memberships

- Member of the British Psychological Society (BPS)
- Member of the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) of the BPS
- Registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC)

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OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- I have full enhanced DBS clearance
- I hold personal professional indemnity insurance