

## About Parsons Dowd

Parsons Dowd is a nationally established firm of expert witness psychologists offering forensic psychology assessments for legal purposes.

We are recognised within the legal profession for providing a pre-eminent service that is both fast and efficient, based on a total understanding of the client's brief. In fact, where at all possible, it is our objective to deliver clear and concise assessment reports within four weeks of instruction, thus enabling urgent legal matters to proceed quickly.

Parsons Dowd experts are all highly experienced psychologists and, as a firm that completely appreciates its contribution to the justice system and society itself, sets out to be both approachable and affordable.

With offices in London, Edinburgh and the North of England, we are easily reached and are equally able to cover the UK and Eire to visit clients in their homes, social care venues, or solicitors' offices.

### Our expertise includes:

Family, personal injury, criminal, sexual risk assessments; mental health tribunals and work in relation to matrimonial issues. In addition we offer various treatments that can be used in both civil and criminal proceedings.

For further details of Parsons Dowd services, please contact Dr Shaun Parsons or Dr Jonathan Dowd on:

0191 286 2831

[www.parsonsdowd.co.uk](http://www.parsonsdowd.co.uk)  
[office@parsonsdowd.co.uk](mailto:office@parsonsdowd.co.uk)



## Parsons Dowd Services:

### Family

As a practice we have completed hundreds of parent and whole family assessments and expert witness court appearances relating to family circumstances, such as contact disputes and proceedings.

### Personal Injury

For cases relating to personal injury, we offer assessments of the psychological effects of trauma, including: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; symptom analysis and validity psychological effects of childhood abuse; and effects of industrial accidents, or assaults at work.

### Criminal

Practice co-founder Dr Jonathan Dowd, has specialist knowledge in criminal assessments to inform proceedings. This can be utilised at various stages of the proceedings, including pre-trial, post conviction and pre-sentencing.

### Immigration And Asylum Seekers

Work in this area involves the assessment of intellectual ability (including cases where English is not spoken); assessment of Post Traumatic Stress in relation to alleged abuse; and assessment for validity of psychological symptoms.

### Sexual Risk Assessments

Partner Dr Shaun Parsons is a specialist in sexual risk assessment and treatment, having carried out international research into the assessment, management and treatment of sexual offenders.

### Mental Health Tribunals

We are able to provide assessment in the case of sexual or violent risk, cognitive functioning, learning disability and such personality disorders as psychopathy and are fully trained and verified in the use of the gold standard measure, the Hare Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R).

### Matrimonial

Parsons Dowd is able to provide assessment and treatment of psychological and emotional difficulties following traumatic and abusive relationships, or after a difficult relationship breakdown.

### Treatment

As a practice, we are trained in a number of specialist areas to provide treatment that can be relevant in a number of civil and criminal proceedings. These include: anger management therapy; treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; treatment for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse; and management of domestic violence. We also provide an extensive range of corporate psychological treatments including relaxation therapy, addiction cessation and workplace conflict management techniques.

### Fee

We regard our fees as being wholly competitive, providing value for money based upon a locally established practice operating on a national scale with international expertise. Each fee is, of course, calculated by individual case circumstances.



Dr. Shaun Parsons

Chartered Forensic Psychologist  
PhD, MSc, G.Dip Psych, BSc (Hons), Cert HE

Dr Shaun Parsons has extensive experience of working within both the criminal justice system and the civil courts. He is specially trained in working with and assessing sex offenders and their families. Dr Parsons has also worked with survivors of childhood sexual abuse, including adults. He has completed hundreds of reports for both the criminal and civil courts and has appeared as an expert witness in numerous proceedings. He has also carried out research into the relationship between personality and behaviour, as well as the detection and monitoring of sex offenders in the community.



Dr. Jonathan Dowd

Forensic Psychologist  
PhD, MA, G.Dip Psych, Dip HE

Dr Jonathan Dowd has worked extensively in both criminal and civil court systems with particular emphasis upon child care and custody risk assessment issues. Having also a vast amount of experience working in a criminal justice and policing environment, Dr Dowd is able to advise on the psychological aspects of offending, police interviewing, suggestibility issues, duress, and PACE related matters. Dr Dowd has been trained in the administration and scoring of the Hare Psychopathy Checklist by Bill Hare himself and the Darkstone organisation. His research background has centered upon the causes of “unpredictable” behaviour.



Professor Chris Stevenson

Family Therapist/Chartered Psychologist  
C.Psychol

Professor Stevenson has worked for many years as a family therapist and conducted assessments and prepared court reports in relation to a wide range of cases. She is able to make full assessments of the structure and functioning of families, in terms of their relationships and communication and to conduct psychometric testing to establish the form of the organisation. She uses a range of assessment techniques so that young children are included in the family assessment process. She has studied the process of family meetings and is currently conducting research to evaluate multisystemic therapy for disturbed adolescents.

# Dr. Jonathan Dowd

## Chartered Psychologist, Chartered Scientist

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Cuthbert House, City Road  
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DATE OF BIRTH 24.09.1967.

CITIZENSHIP UK Citizen

### **Academic Qualifications**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Forensic Psychology – July 2005

Master of Science (MSc) Applied Forensic Psychology – November 2007

Post Graduate Diploma (GDip Psych) in Psychology – September 2004

Master of Arts (MA) Management Studies – June 1998

Post Graduate Diploma (GDip HE) Higher Education – June 2000

### **Professional Qualifications**

Chartered Psychologist BPS number - 201382

Chartered Scientist BPS number – 201382

Foundation Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) – Jan 2007

My practice has allowed me to specialise in the identification of symptoms of post traumatic stress and also to assist in cases where malingering may be considered an issue. As a member of The British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies I am able to offer advice relating to the relevance of such therapies to individual case circumstances.

I have received specialist training (*Working with Sex Offenders*) at the Sexual Behavioural Unit at St Nicholas Hospital, Newcastle Upon Tyne, on working and assessing sex offenders and their families including partners' ability to protect.

My police experience has allowed me to incorporate my experience in dealing with child protection issues, sex offender risk assessment and management and PACE related matters into my forensic practice in both family and criminal proceedings both in the United Kingdom and The Republic of Ireland.

I have received formal PCL-R assessment of Psychopathy training from the Darkstone Organisation and Robert Hare achieving the Gold Standard of competency.

In addition I have been trained in use of the HCR-20 Risk Assessment of Violence matrix.

### **Areas of expertise**

#### Family and Capacity

- Parenting assessment including risk assessment of physical and sexual abuse, violence (including domestic violence) and partners' ability to protect.
- Assessment of the effects of childhood physical or sexual abuse on adult functioning.
- All aspects of Care proceedings
- Assessment of capacity as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 particularly in cases of sensory impaired clients.
- Psychological aspects of child physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- Attachment theory and relevance to parental behaviour
- Family assessments
- Substance abuse and dependence in a forensic context
- Psychological effects of matrimonial / relationship breakdown and abusive relationships

#### Criminal

- False confessions and assessment of suggestibility in police interviews
- Offender risk assessment (including sex offenders)
- Fitness to plead (including intellectual ability)
- Management of sex offenders in the community
- Detection and management of psychiatric disorders by the police and prison services

- Criminal responsibility Suggestibility and compliance in people with learning disability
- Defences of Automatism
- Strength of eye witness testimony / evidence
- Police practice and procedure
- Police treatment of vulnerable individuals
- Assessment and diagnosis of Psychopathy (PCL-R)

#### Employment, Personal Injury and immigration

- Psychological assessment of fitness to work/suspicion of malingering
- Assessment of stress related symptoms in the workplace symptoms
- Anxiety, depression, phobias and other psychological problems
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the assessment of psychological consequences of trauma
- Assessment of fitness to work / suspicion of malingering and exaggeration of symptoms

#### **Reports prepared**

Single Joint Expert 150+ (Child care cases)

Criminal: 20+

Other Court proceedings 20+

*The contact details of lawyers who have used Dr Dowd and have agreed to provide a reference can be provided on request.*

#### **Membership of Professional Bodies**

Member of The British Psychological Society, BPS number 201382.

Member of The British Association For Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, BABCP number 070295.

#### **Current Positions Held**

Director, Parsons Dowd Psychological Limited (employed as a consultant psychologist).

Sub Editor, 'The Psychologist - Forensic Update', British Psychological Society.

## **Relevant Previous positions**

Honorary Forensic Psychologist, Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside -Mental Health Trust.

Visiting Lecturer – School of Medicine, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne 1996 – 2001.

## **Publications / Articles / Official Reports**

Dowd, J. (2007). Policing Personality. Forensic Update, January 2007.

Dowd, J. (2004). Improving Mental Health Awareness. The Superintendent (38).

Dowd, J. (2003). Mental Health Matters. Police Review.

Dowd, J & Parsons, S. (2003) Northumbria Police Mental Health Awareness Training Evaluation Report. University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Dowd, J. (2002). Crisis Intervention Training Evaluation Report. International Fulbright Commission.

## **Conference Papers**

Parsons, S. & Dowd, J. Crisis Intervention Training International Academy of Law and Mental Health 28th International Congress on Law and Mental Health, Sydney, Australia. September 28<sup>th</sup>- October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003.

Dowd, J. & Parsons S. Key note paper Crisis Intervention Training in the United Kingdom. Washington State Partners in Crisis, Yakima City, USA. September 2004.

Dowd, J. & Parsons, S. Workshop Mental Health and Policing in the United Kingdom, Washington State Partners in Crisis, Yakima City, USA. September 2004

Dowd J, Parsons S. Police training on Mental Health Independent Police Complaints Commission, Central region training, Birmingham. 20<sup>th</sup> January 2005

**Dr Shaun Parsons,**  
**Chartered Forensic Psychologist, Chartered Scientist**

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DATE OF BIRTH 16.08.1963.

CITIZENSHIP UK Citizen

**Academic qualifications**

BSc (Hons), Health Studies, 1993, University of Sunderland.

Graduate Diploma in Psychology, 1995, University of Sunderland.

Certificate of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, University of Newcastle, 1998

PhD The DSM Cluster B Personality Disorders: Validity of the concept and effects on primary care, 1998, University of Newcastle.

MSc in Applied Forensic Psychology, University of Leicester, 2002.

**Professional Qualifications**

Chartered Forensic Psychologist, BPS number 92322, Chartered Scientist.

My professional practice has concentrated on applying a risk assessment model to parenting assessment. I particularly focus on the association between personality structure as a method of explaining past difficulties and parenting and the use of this information to provide a risk assessment that is robust and based upon sound scientific theoretical underpinnings.

I have also received specialist training on working and assessing sex offenders and their families including partners' ability to protect. I have run and led Sex Offender treatment programmes and also undertaken research in the use of polygraphy in the management of sex offenders in the community. I have undertaken therapy with the survivors of childhood sexual abuse including assessment and treatment of adult psychopathology resulting from childhood sexual abuse.

## **Areas of expertise**

### Family and Capacity

- Parenting assessment including risk assessment of physical and sexual abuse, violence (including domestic violence) and partners' ability to protect.
- Assessment of the effects of childhood physical or sexual abuse on adult functioning.
- All aspects of Care proceedings
- Assessment of capacity as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 particularly in cases of sensory impaired clients.
- Psychological aspects of child physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- Attachment theory and relevance to parental behaviour
- Family assessments
- Substance abuse and dependence in a forensic context. Effect of substance misuse and dependence upon parenting abilities.
- Psychological effects of matrimonial / relationship breakdown and abusive relationships

### Criminal

- False confessions and assessment of suggestibility in police interviews
- Offender risk assessment (including sex offenders)
- Fitness to plead (including intellectual ability)
- Management of sex offenders in the community
- Detection and management of psychiatric disorders by the police and prison services
- Criminal responsibility suggestibility and compliance in people with learning disability
- Defences of Automatism
- Strength of eye witness testimony / evidence
- Assessment and diagnosis of Psychopathy (PCL-R)

Employment, Personal Injury and immigration

- Psychological assessment of fitness to work/suspicion of malingering
- Assessment of stress related symptoms in the workplace symptoms
- Anxiety, depression, phobias and other psychological problems
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the assessment of psychological consequences of trauma
- Exaggeration of symptoms

### **Reports prepared**

Single Joint Expert 600+ (Child care cases)  
I have given evidence in court in over 50 of these cases.

Criminal: 60+ (prosecution 60% defence 40%)  
I have given evidence in court in over 15 of these cases.

Other litigation and reports not in legal proceedings 30+

*The contact details of lawyers who have used Dr Parsons and Parsons Dowd Psychological Ltd and have agreed to provide a reference can be provided on request.*

### **Membership of professional bodies**

Member of the British Psychological Society (full member of the Division of Forensic Psychology).

Full member of the Institute of Teaching and Learning

Member of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers

### **Employment**

#### **Present Employment:**

1. Director Parsons Dowd Psychological Ltd (employed as Consultant Forensic Psychologist)
2. Honorary Clinical Lecturer School of Neurobiology, Neurology and Psychiatry University of Newcastle 30.09.2006 – present.

### Significant Past Appointments.

- Clinical Lecturer in Clinical Psychology University of Newcastle; Honorary Forensic Psychologist Newcastle Northumberland and North Tyneside NHS Trust 01.08.2001-30.09.2005,
- Lecturer department of Psychiatry University of Newcastle 25.11.95-01.08.2001
- Research Associate, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Newcastle. 06.95-11.95
- Visiting lecturer School of Health Sciences University of Sunderland. 10.93-11.95

### **Relevant Publications**

Madsen, L; Parsons, S; Grubin, D (2006); The relationship between the five-factor model and DSM personality disorder in a sample of child molesters Personality and Individual Differences. Vol 40 (2), Jan, pp.227-236

Parsons S, Walker L, Grubin D (2001) Prevalence of Mental Disorder in Female Remand Prisoners Journal of Forensic Psychiatry 12. 1. 194-202

Gavin N, Parsons S and Grubin D (2003) Reception Screening and Mental Health Needs Assessment in a Male Remand Prison Psychiatric Bulletin 27, 251-253

Grubin, D; Madsen, L; Parsons, S (2004) A preliminary study of the contribution of periodic polygraph testing to the treatment and supervision of sex offenders Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology; 15 (4), pp.682-695

Grubin, D Madsen, L; Parsons S; Sosnowski, D; Warberg, B (2004) A prospective study of the impact of polygraphy on high-risk behaviors in adult sex offenders Sexual Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment. Vol 16(3) pp. 209-222

Parsons. S. (1997) The Epidemiology and effects of Borderline Personality Disorder in Primary' Health Care. Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing (4) pp 145-146.,

Parsons. S, Walker. L. (1998). The treatment of people with a personality disorder in primary' healthcare settings. Mental Health Practice . (1) 7, pp 16-20,

Dodds F, Rebar-Brown A, Parsons S, (2000) A systematic review of randomised trials that attempt to identify interventions that improve patient compliance with prescribed anti-psychotic medication. Clinical Effectiveness in Nursing, (4) 2 pp 47-53,.

### *Invited Papers*

Parsons S. Working with Depression Mental Health Practice. 3. 4, 32-36. 1999

*Official Reports (Unpublished but Public)*

\*Grubin D, Parsons S, and Hopkins C Report on the Evaluation of a New Reception Health Questionnaire and Associated training. Report for Her Majesty's Prison Service (1999).

\*Grubin D, Parsons S, and Walker L. Mental Health Screening in Female Remand Prisoners. Report for the NHS National Programme on Forensic Mental Health Rand D/ HM Prison Service. (2000)

\*Grubin D, Parsons S and Gavin N. HMP Holme House; Post Reception Screening Mental Health (2001)

\*Grubin D, Parsons S and Gavin N; Mental Health Needs Assessment in a male remand prison. Report for South Tees Health Authority. (2000)

# **Professor Christine Stevenson**

## **Chartered Psychologist, Family Therapist**

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DATE OF BIRTH 27/06/53.

CITIZENSHIP UK Citizen

### **Academic qualifications**

1997 Certificate in Teaching and Learning, University of Newcastle  
1995 PhD Psychology/Family Therapy, University of Northumbria  
1991 MSc (Dist) Health and Social Research, University of Northumbria  
1984 BA (Hons) Psychology (BPS recognised) and Sociology, Sunderland Polytechnic

### **Professional Qualifications**

Chartered Psychologist, Registered Mental Health Nurse

### **Family therapy practice**

I assess families who have found themselves in disarray and are subject to family court proceedings. I have assessed and produced reports on over 50 families (interviewing and production of reports and reading case papers), and testified in court on many occasions.

Between 2000-2003 I practised within the Eating Distress Team (within the Northern regional Eating Disorder Service) (with Dr Reed, Catriona Grey, Tom Williams; estimated practice hours 480). At this time Dr Reed was the course leader for the Cert/GradDip/MSc in Family Therapy and Systemic Practice at Northumbria University. We trained MRC(Psych) students based at University of Newcastle, Department of Psychiatry. Our work is described in: Gray, C., Reed, A., Stevenson, C. & Williams, T. (2004) Systemic Therapy for Eating Distress. *Clinical Psychology Forum*. 43: 45-47.

Between 1992-1999 I practiced within North Shields Family Team (with Dr Jim Birch, Alex Reed, Glynis Spriddell, Steve Nash). The service was offered one afternoon per

week (estimated practice hours over the time period = 1120), working with people in psychosis and their families referred from out-patients, in-patients and GPs. During this period, I was awarded my PhD in Psychology/Family Therapy (jointly supervised by Professor Bob Heyman and Dr Birch), which compared the process of defining a therapeutic context in which to begin family therapy through the comparison of our reflecting team approach with that of Milan and Structural/Strategic operated by two different family therapy teams (Stevenson, C. (1995) *Negotiating a Therapeutic Context in Family Therapy*. Unpublished Thesis, University of Northumbria.). My thesis was externally examined by Professor John Carpenter who was the editor of the Journal of Family Therapy for many years. We also established systemic social network meetings on an acute inpatient facility (with Wilson).

### **Areas of expertise**

#### Family and Capacity

- All aspects of Care proceedings but specialising in:
- Systemic family assessment including psychological assessment of children
- Attachment theory and relevance to parental behaviour
- Parental and sibling attachment
- Cognitive assessment of children
- Psychological aspects of child physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- Psychological and family effects of matrimonial / relationship breakdown and abusive relationships
- Risk assessments in collaboration with Dr Parsons or Dr Dowd

### **Reports prepared**

Single Joint Expert 50+ (Child care cases)

I have given evidence in court in many of these cases.

*The contact details of lawyers who have used Dr Parsons and Parsons Dowd Psychological Ltd and have agreed to provide a reference can be provided on request.*

### **Membership of professional bodies**

Member of the British Psychological Society

## **Employment**

### Present Employment:

1. Chair in mental health, Dublin City University, Republic of Ireland
2. Consultant Family Therapist and Chartered Psychologist Parsons Dowd Psychological Ltd

### Significant Past Appointments.

- Jan 2005-May 2005 Chair in Mental Health Nursing, University of Teesside
- June 2004-May 2005 Deputy Director, Teesside Centre for Rehabilitation Sciences
- July 2002-Dec 2004 Reader in Nursing, University of Teesside
- Jan 1995- June 2003 Honorary Nurse Consultant (Family Therapy), NNN Mental Health NHS Trust
- Jan 1995-June 2002 Lecturer/Clinical Lecturer in Psychiatric Nursing Practice, University of Newcastle
- Sept 1991-Dec 1994 Senior Lecturer in Health Studies, University of Sunderland
- May 1991-Aug 1991 Community Mental Health Team Leader, Nursing Grade I, South Tyneside District Hospital, Tyne and Wear
- Jan 1989-April 1991 Community Psychiatric Nurse Team Leader, Nursing Grad H, St. George's Hospital, Northumberland
- Sept 1985-Dec 1988 Community Psychiatric Nurse, Grade G, St George's Hospital,

## **Relevant Publications**

### **Family therapy teaching/training/consultancy offered**

#### *a) Multiple contributions*

Foundation Course/PG Cert/PG Dip/MA Family Therapy and Systemic Practice, University of Northumbria (Dr Alex Reed)

MA Systemic Management, University of Sunderland (Jeremy Kearney)

*b) Single presentations*

- 1994 "Reflective Family Therapy & Schizophrenia", Literary & Philosophical Soc., Newcastle
- 1995 "Family Therapy & Severe Mental Illness: Mad or Bad?", Mental Health North Annual Conference, University of Sunderland
- 1995 "Family Therapy & Schizophrenia: 101 Uses For a Dead Discourse", BPS Psychotherapy Section Annual Conference, Bristol
- 1995 "Brief Therapy & Family Systems", DCP South-West Annual Meeting, Wonford Hospital, Exeter
- 1995 "Family Therapy & Reflective Practice", Dep. Psychology, Treliske Hospital, Cornwall
- 1995 "Introduction to Family Work in Mental Illness", South Tyneside Social Services
- 1995 "The Construction of Authority: Power & Context in Family Meetings", Conference: The Construction of Psychiatric Authority, Department of Psychiatry, University of Newcastle, June 20-21, Longhirst Hall, Northumberland.
- 1996 "Reflective Family Therapy", Psychological therapies Programme, St. Nicholas Hospital, Newcastle
- 1996 "Reflective Family Therapy", Psychological Interventions Programme, Newcastle City Health Trust

*I am active in teaching/ doctoral students in psychotherapy (taught and PhD) and have published extensively in the area of psychotherapy and young people in distress, for example:*

Gordon, E., Stevenson, C. and O'Connor, C. (at press) Reaching Out to Distressed Young People in Ireland: Evaluation of Teen-Line Ireland Support Help-line for Teenagers. *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*.

Abba, N., Chadwick, P. and Stevenson, C. (2008, on line new articles August 2007) Responding mindfully to psychosis: A grounded theory analysis. *Psychotherapy Research*, 189:77-87.

I have published two chapters (currently revised with co-author Evelyn Gordon and at re-print for publication in 2008) supporting basic family therapy training for nurses:

Stevenson, C. (2003) The context of assessment: families. In: P.J. Barker (ed.), *Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*. London: Arnold.

Stevenson, C. (2003) Family Support. In: P.J. Barker (ed.), *Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*. London: Arnold.