

# Re-entering the profession?

*Have you taken a break from practising and wish to return? Do you need to apply to the HPC for re-admission to the register? If so, the BDA 'Open Flexible Learning Programme for Re-entrants to the Profession' is for you.*



**Our flexible programme for BDA members will enable you to build on your existing knowledge and practice base as the programme enables key aspects of dietetics to be revisited and allows you to focus on**

**new issues which are relevant to current practice. For an insight into the programme, Jacqui Moran, a recent re-entrant to the profession describes her experiences of returning to practice.**

I left the profession ten years ago to bring up my two children and in January 2010, I decided to look into returning to practice.

I qualified as a dietitian in 1992. My first job as a Basic Grade was at the Royal Oldham Hospital, before moving to Bolton General Hospital where I developed my interest in diabetes management. I developed my skills in diabetes when I joined the team at the Royal Liverpool Hospital employed as a Diabetes Specialist Dietitian from 1995-2000. I left Liverpool after the birth of my second child.

During my time out of practice I was able to spend more time pursuing my passion for sports nutrition and eventually I was directed towards a job as a Cardiac Healthcare Advisor at a Wellness Centre in association with Adidas UK. It was this job that prompted me to make enquires at the BDA.

I was informed that as I had been out of dietetics for over five years that I would have to complete a period of sixty days updating my skills and knowledge to re-register as a dietitian with the HPC. Initially I found this thought very daunting. The first

tentative step was to attend the BDA 'Introductory day for re-entrants to the profession' which is held at the BDA offices in Birmingham. This day is essential for anyone who has had a long break from the NHS. There are many different routes to fulfil the criteria set by the HPC to re-register as a dietitian and the BDA Re-entrants Programme is one of them. After the Introductory Day the first hurdle was to find a local facilitator. I made a call to my previous manager at the Royal Liverpool Hospital and eventually from this, a diary of work-shadowing with each specialist dietitian was arranged. My programme involved all aspects of dietetics from PN on ICU to diabetic clinics to weight-management workshops in the community. The course is flexible although requires commitment and organisation. Depending on the Trust with which you retrain, HR may require you to have an honorary contract due to patient contact, which involves a CRB check and can take up to six weeks, so in my case I got off to a slow start.

My programme was arranged around when I was available

and when the dietitian who was supervising me was able to fit me into their working schedule. Some students who retrain have studied their chosen modules continuously whereas it worked better for me in sporadic blocks.

The NHS had seriously changed since 2000. When I had left, NICE Guidelines were in their infancy but now there seems to be a guideline for every condition and eventuality. Dietitians are no longer Basic grades and Seniors but are Banded and Advanced Practitioners according to their job responsibilities.

From a manager's perspective there seemed to be a lot more involvement in budgeting and concepts such as the Knowledge and Skills Framework, audit and CPD. There was also a lot more time taken up with form filling, checking written records for accuracy and ensuring they are non-discriminate and evidence based. Consultations are also different and are now very focused on cognitive/behavioural teaching methods. The use of IT has also come on in leaps and bounds over the last ten years. All in all the profile of the 'dietitian' has been significantly



raised and the role of nutrition is taken more seriously in the treatment and prevention of disease management.

Since completing the course, I am now re-registered and have joined the BDA branch of Freelance Dietitians. I have been lucky to secure work within Elite sports at a newly built centre of excellence for sports injury and rehabilitation, and I am at present holding nutrition workshops on military fitness for weight loss (which are proving to be highly effective). I am still looking for part-time work in the NHS, to keep involved in clinical dietetics. I don't want to lose my years of experience in diabetes especially after refreshing and updating my knowledge and skills through the re-entrants course, which was the pathway to my re-registration with the NHS.

## Facilitators needed!

Each participant of the programme is required to work with a dietitian based in a dietetic department to undertake the practical elements of each module. We are very grateful to all those departments and dietitians that have worked with previous participants of the programme. Catriona Sergison, who acted as the facilitator for Jacqui, outlines the positive experience it was for her department:

"Most of the work of the programme is done by the returner - we provided the vehicle but the driver taught herself and along the way we

all gained from it. In my opinion it is good for the profession to have a mixture of experience and new graduates and patients will benefit from the experience of the re-entrants".

If your department would be willing to host a re-entrant we would be very grateful if you could let us know so we can direct new re-entrants to willing departments. Please e-mail Karen Leek at [k.leek@bda.uk.com](mailto:k.leek@bda.uk.com) For anyone interested in the Re-entrants Programme the next introductory session is on **Monday 13th June**. 