



Dietitians make a difference to patients' lives – their health and quality of life. Our services are also cost effective. Dietitians know this but do the people who are responsible for making decisions about health services in your area know? In our current health system it's now more important than ever to engage locally with key decision makers.

What is a Clinical Senate?

There are 12 Clinical Senates in England. Clinical Senates support commissioners to make the best decisions about healthcare for the populations they represent.

They provide independent, clinical leadership and credibility and their main roles are to take a strategic overview of all healthcare in a region and advise commissioning bodies such as the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) on:

- Potential areas for improving outcomes and value
- Care pathways
- Innovations and good ideas
- Major service change/development

A Clinical Senate is made up of a Council and the Assembly. The former is a 'steering' group of senior health leaders who oversee the Senate's business and draw on the views and expertise of the Assembly members.

The latter is a multidisciplinary group of experts and leaders from a broad range of health and care professionals (including Allied Health Professionals -AHPs) and Academic Health Science Networks.

Both groups include patient and public representatives.



This is one of a series of fact sheets designed to help you to 'stand up for dietetics' in your local area and influence the decision makers.

standing up for dietetics

Why do dietitians need to influence Clinical Senates?

They influence and advise CCGs on service developments and care pathways and so it is important that they are aware of the role and valuable contribution of dietitians. If we don't 'stand up for dietetics' they may never know about us!

What can I do? Here are some ideas...

-  **Find out if there is a dietitian or AHP representative on the Council or Assembly in your Clinical Senate** – you may find this information on their website.
-  **If there is a dietitian or an AHP on the Council or Assembly make contact with them** and share your ideas about services.
-  If there is not a dietitian or AHP on the Council or Assembly, **contact the Senate Chair and make the case for an AHP on the Assembly** – put yourself forward or encourage a colleague to do so.
-  **Familiarise yourself with the national and local healthcare outcomes and strategies.** You will need to know these when developing relationships with Senate Assembly members.
-  **Join forces with other dietitians, AHPs, patient groups** when you have a shared agenda because this will allow you to have a louder voice together.

How can I 'stand up for dietetics'?

All dietitians and not just dietetic managers can influence Clinical Senates. Your action need not be grand in scale – it will count no matter how small.

Could you 'stand up for dietetics' in your area and ensure that dietetics stays and even grows on the healthcare map?