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What can I do as a dietitian?

standing up for dietetics

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 the current health system it's now more important than ever to engage locally with key decision makers.

 **The health and social care agenda is now being set locally. This is fantastic news for patients, carers and users but really challenging for national bodies like the BDA. We rely on our members on the ground to be the eyes, ears and voice of the profession. Only by our members influencing locally will we be able to continue driving dietetic services forward.**

Andy Burman
Chief Executive Officer, BDA 

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

 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.

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Why is it so important now?

The new health and social care system in England means that a range of people are responsible for commissioning healthcare services including dietetics. These people are under pressure to commission evidence based and cost effective services. We know that dietetic services are cost effective and make a difference to the health and quality of life of many different groups of patients but commissioners may not. It's up to us to tell them. If we don't 'stand up for dietetics' no one else will. Our jobs are at risk of being done by someone else or not being done at all and this would impact patient outcomes unless we make a stand now!

What is the BDA doing to help?

The BDA is also working at a national level to promote the role of dietitians in patient care and public health by influencing the key people who decide what services are commissioned. But in this localised health and care system we can't do it on our own – we need you too! Together we can make a difference!

We need you to help us 'stand up for dietetics' - no matter whether you are a student, newly graduated, fully qualified with years of experience, a manager or an academic.

What can I do?

-  **Harness the power of patients** – make sure they have a good experience of dietetics and ask them to tell others about it via compliments slips, writing letters to the Trust Chief Executive and their MPs
-  **Share good news stories and compliments** from patients with leaders in your area
-  **Put copies of the BDA Key Facts sheets and BDA Trust a Dietitian information sheets in the patient waiting area** and advertise the BDA website for impartial, reliable and credible nutrition advice
-  **Share your examples of good practice and innovation** with us at the BDA - you can do this by contacting the BDA: Trustdietitian@bda.uk.com. We will use your examples to champion dietitians nationally
-  **Attend BDA local and national events** to share good practice: Specialist group and Branch events, conferences, study days
-  **Accept invitations to speak at local, national and international dietetic and medical conferences** – use every opportunity to 'stand up for dietetics'
-  **Take part in national consultations** – these come out via the BDA or your BDA Specialist Groups
-  **Sit on national expert groups**
-  **Join your local Branch or Board of the BDA or the BDA Council**
-  **Evaluate your service and promote good results**
-  **Work with local media** – get a regular column going
-  **Talk to local patient groups**
-  **Have a stand at your local student health fair**
-  **Participate in inter-professional learning**
-  **Apply for local good practice awards**
-  **Network with other healthcare professionals** who may not understand what a dietitian does
-  **Apply for national good practice awards** and tell everyone when you are shortlisted or win! (The BDA publicises the major awards open to AHPs but there are many opportunities)