



The Association  
of UK Dietitians

---

Driving dietetics forward, together.  
Our strategic plan 2021-24

---

## Our Vision

Improve the health of the UK population by: protecting and improving health and care services, developing health and social care nutrition policy, improving the impact of dietetics and promoting positive discussion on food, nutrition, wellbeing and health.

## Our core values

- We will be a credible and trusted organisation.
- We will be dynamic, professional and innovative.
- We will take an agile, responsive, transparent and accessible approach to delivery.
- We will take a four nations approach to implementation of our plan, securing opportunities that arise in each nation for the benefit of all.

## Core purpose

We are committed to developing an organisational core purpose with members in 2021.

## Introduction from our Chair and CEO

This year the BDA turns 85. Established in 1936, the original objectives still remain relevant and resonate today.

*"To further the knowledge of dietetics" and "To provide facilities for those interested to meet in order to discuss and advise on all matters connected with dietetics or bearing on the work of dietitians".*

The establishment of the professional skills of a dietitian, the promotion of training and education in the science and practice of dietetics and the support for members to develop and flourish, remain at the heart of what we do. We are proud of our achievements, delivered by our branches & groups, boards and the office team. The voluntary contribution of members is colossal, and has enabled the BDA to punch well above its weight.

The world has changed rapidly around us, with COVID-19 presenting extraordinary challenges to us all. Our plan reflects this context and sets out how we will build on our strengths and use the challenge of COVID-19 to convert opportunities presented in each of the four nations into real benefits for our members, patients and the wider public.

Our plan is deliberately bold and ambitious. We will need to make significant choices about our strategic priorities. We have considered how the BDA may be different to other membership associations. It would be easy to take a populist approach by focusing broadly across the health and wellness agenda. However, we are at a pivotal period for the profession; we have a dietetic workforce that is not growing at the pace that is needed for the future.

We need to give focus and energy to growing capacity and capability in our profession. Stimulating unmet need and suppressed demand and prioritising our future workforce as a core strategic objective. Growing the profession, dietetic visibility and presence will be the primary focus of this strategic plan.

If we are courageous in ensuring we do less, but are more focused, we will realise our ambitions and achieve the impact our members, partners, patients and the public deserve. We thank our members, our volunteers and staff who have contributed to our plan. We remain committed to grounding this plan in your everyday reality. We are excited to share it and look forward to realising its potential together.

## Shifting sands – the world around us

The world around us has changed significantly, the BDA needs to adapt and seize opportunities presented by COVID-19 as the world has reacted to one of the greatest challenges of our lifetime. In this section we set out the main issues, and opportunities to which our profession must respond.

Society	
Issue	We have the opportunity to:
<p><b>Food interest high in society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Diet culture – fad diets, food trends</i></li> <li>• <i>vegan/ vegetarian</i></li> <li>• <i>Public /Policy interest in public protection advice e.g., Vitamin D, lifestyle advice</i></li> <li>• <i>Food insecurity, malnutrition, affordability</i></li> <li>• <i>Public interest in environmental sustainability</i></li> </ul>	<p>Explain and promote the role and value of a dietitian in society</p> <p>Consider our relationship with the public on behalf of our members</p> <p>Be more selective on the campaigns we choose to run to increase results</p>
<p><b>Health &amp; Well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Impact of COVID-19</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase in childhood and adult obesity</i></li> </ul>	<p>Evidence the value of dietitians</p> <p>Lead national strategy</p>
<p><b>Changing social media ethics</b> <i>Public looking to high profile individuals on social media as key nutrition influencers who do not have to follow accurate information about food and nutrition</i></p>	<p>Achieve cut through on misinformation by empowering members to be ‘myth busters’.</p>
<p><b>Increased awareness and importance of Equality Diversity &amp; Inclusion, especially race &amp; BLM</b></p>	<p>Underpin our approach to delivering our strategic plan with the principles and goals of equality, diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Build a platform of EDI to inform our approach to everything we do</p>
<p><b>Remote working</b> <i>More people working from home in the future</i></p>	<p>Promote healthy home working through BDA ‘Work Ready Programme’</p>
<p><b>Ageing population</b> <i>Increasing demand for medical nutrition and an increase in long term conditions</i></p>	<p>Rapidly expand the dietetic workforce at all points to meet unmet need and suppressed demand</p>

**Changing perspective of Younger Adults**  
*Younger people want different things from their career than other generations*

Revise entry points and career pathway to dietetics, with new role and placement design

**Increase in demand on NHS**  
**COVID- long COVIDs and backlog of untreated/undiagnosed conditions**

Rapidly expand the dietetic workforce at all points to meet increase capacity demand

**Mainstream antipathy to unions**

Promote the value proposition of TU to all members

## Technology

### Issue

### We have the opportunity to:

**Digitalisation of communication, easy access to health information**  
*Public/member interest in apps*

Adapt quickly to technologies and changing work processes to maximise benefits of our investment in Digital Futures project

**Growth of social media**  
*Growth of influencer marketing*  
*Shrinking of traditional print media*

Ensure our Communications Strategy takes this into account to support our members in this area and counter mis-information.

**Online delivery of events/professional development**  
*Increased accessibility of services, events, learning and development*  
*Expectation technology is free (It isn't!)*

Increase accessibility and reduce cost through further developing online events, learning and blended learning

**Evidence & outcomes of online interventions work**

Continue to explore developments in the dietetic workforce's use of technology including online/tele assessment/treatment interventions and support their evaluation, including impact of technology.

## The economy and the profession

### Issue

### We have the opportunity to:

#### NHS funding: less funding for NHS workplace health

*HR departments have less money available for workplace health despite the rhetoric of workforce investment*

Promote our Work Ready programme as a solution to workplace health and prioritise its promotion with keyworkers

#### Impact on dietetic workforce

*University funding and bursary changes*

*Dietitians perceived as expensive compared to unregistered staff*

Prioritise our campaigning and influencing efforts to grow the profession and expand the workforce

#### Impending recession

*Less spend generally & on food and drink  
Poverty, including food poverty, is rising*

Promote the value of registered dietitians and articulate more clearly why investment is required at all job levels

#### Corporates/sponsorship

*Less available funds*

Work with corporate partners to maximise BDA reach using the expert voice of dietitians

#### Food Import and production costs higher (social distancing & Brexit)

Work with others to influence and campaign on food poverty, supply and food insecurity

## Legal

### Issue

### Opportunity for the BDA

#### Brexit

#### TU Act

#### GDPR

#### Health & Safety Law

#### Trade Act

#### Agriculture Act

#### Food Standards and medical *e.g., labelling*

#### Healthcare Regulation

#### Advertising Regulation- ASA

#### Privatisation of NHS

#### Regulatory framework for dietitians

#### Work Ready and Let's Get Cooking TM

#### Charity Commission

*(General Education Trust)*

There are so many opportunities to influence legislators and policymakers.

We will need to take a more integrated approach to our influencing activities so that we speak with a more united voice across the profession.

The BDA is the voice of the profession, we are a trusted and credible source of advice. However, we must agree to focus on less campaigns in order to achieve a higher level of impact with the resources we have.

## Environmental

### Issue

### Opportunity for the BDA

#### Climate change

*Sustainability agenda, reducing waste, etc- no BDA Policy on climate change*

#### New target requiring UK greenhouse emissions to reach net zero by 2050

#### Obesogenic environment

#### COVID-19 pandemic

*Impact of physical distancing on delivery*

#### Workplace impact of COVID-19

#### Ways of working for dietetic profession

There is appetite for moving this agenda forward and we have emerging and growing evidence in this space.

However, we will need to ensure that we agree the level of strategic priority given to this work compared with our desire to grow a sustainable workforce and achieve greater visibility and voice.

We took the opportunity to test out our key future audiences to reaffirm our commitment to our members first. We concluded that there is a clear hierarchy of audiences for the BDA.

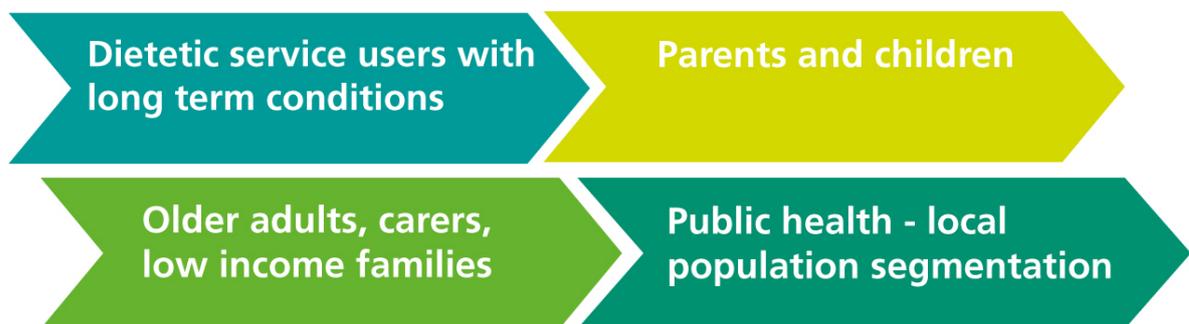
### We will work with:



We will develop a clear public engagement plan in consultation with members that will re-purpose existing resources and define contributions from groups, branches, country boards and the office team.

The overarching aim of this plan will be to promote the value of the dietetic workforce across the UK. The aim is for the public to be our supporters. We have considered our relationship with the public and have further segmented this vast audience group below, to guide our thinking on our future relationships.

The diagram is not to scale, it reflects four priority segments of the public for the BDA. Further detail will be worked up in our public engagement plan.



## Summary membership views

Our membership responded to our annual survey analysed in February 2021. Our members have been impacted by COVID-19 and the majority highly valued the support given by the BDA and the active promotion of the profession.

Membership 'must haves' were cited as:

- Trade union support and advice
- Resources, particularly continuing professional development (CPD)
- Increased influence and public presence

In terms of what changes the BDA should be making there was wide support for the following actions:



We also surveyed some of the dietetic workforce in late 2020. The overall workforce had only grown by 5% since 2011, whilst the workforce faces a 15% capacity challenge (due to maternity leave, retirement and vacant posts).

This 15% does not account for the increased demand for dietetic services which outstrips the current number of dietetic posts. This underlines the need to address issues of expansion, accessibility, diversity, recruitment and retention as a strategic priority.

## What we will do

### Important features of our new plan

- The overall strategic priority of developing and expanding the workforce and profession
- Expanding our membership further and make it fully inclusive
- The importance and value of our trade union
- The need to develop prioritised, integrated campaigns made relevant to each of our four nations
- A desire for a public engagement plan
- Using opportunities in each of the four nations to achieve maximum impact for our membership

Our strategic plan is based on four strategic priorities, underpinned by a progressive, thriving and developing organisation. Each strategic priority will need to be converted into specific work objectives for the BDA to achieve over the next three years.

There has been feedback that we need to draw different parts of the profession together, take a four nations perspective and have a more integrated approach to the planning and delivery of our work. Planning the delivery of our four strategic priorities together will respond to this important feedback.

## Our strategic priorities



Underpinned by a progressive, thriving and developing organisation

**Driving forward our commitment to equality, diversity & reducing health inequalities**

**Moving from financially sustainable to financially developing**

**Maximising the utility of our investment in digital technology**

**Delivering our core services to the highest standards**

**Playing an active role as a conduit for addressing climate change and in the essential progress needed towards a carbon net zero UK by 2050**

## Strategic priority 1 – Building a sustainable workforce

### Together we will:

- Create a 'career climbing frame' that sets out new and more flexible routes to entering the profession and moving between the diverse range of practice settings at each professional level e.g., from apprenticeships through to advanced practitioner roles. We will promote the diversity of dietetics to appeal to new, younger potential audiences
- Further develop careers campaigns to stimulate recruitment
- Protect dietetic registration and accreditation
- Promote non-clinical dietetic roles and identify core transferable skills from clinical roles
- Expand practice-based learning in new settings and use technology to support a more diverse range of placements
- Secure the roll out of first contact dietitians in primary care across the UK. We will accelerate the pace of change by building on work developed by other AHPs
- Lobby for independent prescribing rights and create a new four nation plan to secure change
- Create new ways of supporting and retaining the dietetic workforce applying digital preceptorship, mentoring and coaching and peer networks

## Strategic priority 2 – our BDA community

### Together we will:

- Create a broader, more diverse and more active membership community. We will review our membership recruitment and retention strategies, considering new membership categories and how we promote existing categories. We will expand our membership pathways to make our BDA community more accessible
- Consider how we recruit, recognise and reward our amazing volunteers who we rely upon to deliver this plan. This could include developing 'bite size' volunteering roles
- Increase active engagement across our membership in all four nations
- Set out a clear membership value proposition, so that all members understand the benefits of membership. This will include the core role of our trade union in supporting members in all settings
- Develop an agile, responsive approach within our BDA community
- The public will be our supporters. We will develop a public engagement plan in consultation with members, that ensures the public understand the role and value of a registered dietitian and creates informed demand for services
- Set out our trade union campaigning and influencing priorities and develop more opportunities for member engagement including NHS pay and well-being support
- Promote our 'Work Ready' programme and accredited dietitians to key workers and secure NHS support as part of the well-being agenda, NHS People Plan

## Strategic priority 3 – voice and visibility

### Together we will:

- Review and prioritise our communication and campaigning priorities with workforce as the highest priority issue, for example, campaigns on independent prescribing. We will take a more integrated approach to planning our campaigns across the four nations and across our membership.
- Equip members with tools and resources to help the BDA and dietetics as a profession, achieve the goals set out in this plan and exert maximum influence on issues that matter to members (such as the resources being created in the new career project for dietitians to use)
- Promote and protect the reputation and value of the profession with key influencers and the public
- Support members to develop as leaders and strategic influencers
- Influence private healthcare providers and private medical insurers to ensure that they include registered dietitians
- Position the profession so that it leads the way in prevention, so that dietitians become as good at improving health and preventing disease as historically we have been at treating illness
- Increase transparency in how we work with industry

## Strategic priority 4 – innovative developments

### Together we will:

- Create value propositions for new partnerships that advance the science and practice of dietetics. We will be transparent about our commercial partnerships with our membership.
- We will use technology to improve professional practice, member engagement, learning and development, including online learning/blended learning and events.
- Commission, produce and promote insightful research advancing the science and practice of dietetics.

## A progressive, thriving and sustainable organization

### Together we will:

- Develop and deliver a clear Equalities Diversity & Inclusion Plan created and owned by our membership
- Maximise our investment in digital technologies
- Review our business support processes to ensure that we deliver our core services to the highest standards
- Develop a longer-term financial strategy to move the BDA from financially sustainable to financially developing
- Play an active role as a conduit for addressing climate change and in the essential progress needed towards a carbon net zero UK by 2050. This includes tackling the climate emergency by using our influence in the industries and professions that our members represent

### Implementation plan

We will develop implementation plans, with key milestones for each year of delivery 2021, 2022 and 2023. These plans will be developed using an integrated approach across our groups, branches, country boards and the BDA office. Creating one integrated plan that sets out how each strategic priority will be addressed in each of the four nations and more locally as well as ensuring that we remain locally and nationally relevant across the different settings of the profession.

Published: June 2021  
Review Date: June 2024

© The British Dietetic Association  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Interchange Place, 151-165 Street, Birmingham, B3 2TA  
email: [info@bda.uk.com](mailto:info@bda.uk.com)

Commercial copying, hiring or lending without the written permission of the BDA is prohibited.

[bda.uk.com](http://bda.uk.com)

