

# Evidence Brief: Dietetics

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Produced by the HEE Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer a quick overview of the published reports, research, and evidence on a workforce-related topic.

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There may have been an update to this Evidence Brief - to check you are reading the most current version please see the links below:

- [Complete Evidence Brief list – link for HEE staff](#)
- [Complete Evidence Brief list – link for External staff](#)

### Key publications – the big picture

[BDA Annual reports and accounts](#), 2022, The Association of UK Dietitians

Our impact and our recognition by the public, other healthcare professions and parliamentarians has never been so high.

[National standards for healthcare food and drink](#), 2022, NHS England

The standards describe the methods by which organisations must ensure the quality and sustainability of their food and drink provision for patients, staff and visitors, and how they should be applied and monitored, as well as recommending future improvement aspirations and actions. [A blog post on this guidance can be accessed here.](#)

[The Allied Health Professions \(AHPs\) Strategy for England](#), NHS England, 2022

This strategy is a catalyst for change. Wherever you work, every member of our AHP community has a part in realising our collective ambitions through its delivery. I therefore encourage you to take a moment to consider how the AHP community can enable the change required to deliver future care today.

[Report of the Independent Review of NHS Hospital Food](#), 2020, Department of Health and Social Care

This report makes eight recommendations for system-level change. In Chapter 8 we propose that these are taken forward by an expert group with representation from across the sector and government. These apply mainly to government, NHS England and NHS Improvement, and national regulators.

[Future Dietitian 2025: informing the development of a workforce strategy for dietetics](#), 2017

Healthcare is changing and the professions that deliver it need to adapt and change too. The aim of this research was to inform the development of a workforce strategy for Dietetics for 2020-2030. This included an understanding of the drivers for change, the views of stakeholders, and recommendations to prepare the profession for the future.

[Dietetic Workforce Development Programme](#), BDA

The BDA has been successful in securing significant funding from Health Education England to drive forward our education and professional practice workforce agenda, which will support our work across all four nations.

### Case Studies

[Dietitians in primary care](#)

HEE is working with the British Dietetic Association (BDA) and has funded research to begin to show the impact of dietitians in primary care. This will inform the development of a competency framework and training package for dietitians working in primary care settings. The BDA has also created some helpful online resources for primary care.

[UK Association of Dietetics: Numerous case studies](#)

[Improving dietary intake and achieving food product improvement: policy opportunities and challenges for the WHO European Region in reducing salt and sugar in the diet: featuring case studies from United Kingdom, Israel, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands](#), 2020

This paper provides case studies of several food product improvement policies from across the WHO European Region.

## HEE Star

More resources and tools are available in the AHP Quick Reference Guides section of the [HEE Star](#)

## Statistics

### [British Dietetics Association: Workforce statistics](#)

There are over 9000 Dietitians registered in the UK, an increase of almost 50% in the last decade. The HCPC publishes the latest [registration statistics](#) for dietitians as well as historic information which shows how the profession has grown significantly since 1967.

### [Written evidence submitted by The British Dietetic Association](#)

This submission draws together evidence from the BDA's most recent surveys of our membership to highlight the scale and impact of burnout and stress placed upon dietitians both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## HEE National Data Programme

HEE staff can look at the [National Data Warehouse \(NDL\)](#) SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

## Published Peer Reviewed Research

### Leadership, coaching and education

#### [Clinical Leadership in Dietetics : Viewpoints From the Front Lines](#), 2021, *Abstract only*\*

This qualitative study explored registered dietitian nutritionists' (RDNs'; n = 561) perspectives on what clinical leadership is in dietetics practice and what barriers exist to practicing it.

#### [A qualitative study exploring experiences and challenges of combining clinical academic training with family life](#), 2021

Although people manage to find ways to successfully combine clinical academic roles with family life, findings highlight a need to identify ways of supporting and encouraging trainees with caring responsibilities to ensure that they remain on the clinical academic pathway.

#### [Developing a consolidated research framework for clinical allied health professionals practising in the UK](#), 2020 *Abstract only*\*

A common framework across all AHP disciplines, offering equality in research knowledge and skills and shared language, might be helpful in planning and developing clinical career pathways. Our aim is to develop a consolidated research framework to help AHPs to plan and guide research activity throughout their career.

#### [Clinical Leadership and Innovation Help Achieve Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative Success](#), 2019

Clinical leadership is an informal process that is demonstrated through a range of behaviors. The recently developed leadership taxonomy for clinical dietetics practice encompasses behaviors that align with the quality improvement process and are reflected in the tools and resources of the MQii.

### [Dietetics students' experiences of dietetics workforce preparation and preparedness: a systematic review and qualitative synthesis](#), 2018 *Abstract only*\*

Strategies that focus on exposing dietetics students to inspirational practitioners, increasing and celebrating diversity in academic/placement settings, and incentivising collaboration across dietetics education, could act as catalysts to enhance the experience of future dietetics students and the nutrition-related health of those they will serve.

### [A Consensus Model: Shifting assessment practices in dietetics tertiary education](#), 2018 *Abstract only*\*

This research questions competency-based assessment practices based on discrete placement units and supports a constructivist–interpretivist programmatic approach where evidence across a whole course of study is considered by a panel of assessors.

### [Preparing the Dietetic Workforce of the Future – Developing Innovative Placements in Social Care Settings](#), 2017 *Abstract only*\*

There is a recognition that practice placement models should prepare the dietitians of the future for working beyond NHS environments, and that alternative models of placement should be explored from the perspective of raising the profile of the profession and ensuring sustainability of placement provision.

### [Promoting Diversity within the Dietetics Profession through a Peer Mentorship Program](#), 2016

Although the program was generally considered a success, there were some barriers. Because of the recent development of the program the number of applicants that applied to the program was smaller than expected for year 1. By year 2, more

students were aware of the program and applied to be mentees.

## Community, primary, secondary and tertiary care

### [Quality improvement strategies enhance primary care dietetics: A systematic review and meta-analysis](#), 2021 *Abstract only*\*

Interventions aimed at enhancing quality in primary care dietetic practice support improvements in patient outcomes. Further research on quality improvement interventions for patient outcomes is required to strengthen the evidence base in this important topic.

### [Impact of a dietitian in general practice: Care of the frail and malnourished](#), 2021 *Abstract only*\*

Dietitians, acting as first contact practitioners, can deliver significant improvements in care for older people at risk of malnutrition and frailty as part of the practice multi-disciplinary team. Cost savings for ONS were made and other potential cost saving were evident.

### [Dietetic Workforce Capacity Assessment for Public Health Nutrition and Community Nutrition](#), 2021

Significant opportunity exists to improve the preparedness and training of the current dietetic workforce to increase capacity and meet emerging needs in public health and community nutrition.

### [The Contribution of Registered Dietitians in the Management of Hyperemesis Gravidarum in the United Kingdom](#), 2021 *Abstract only*\*

There was an inconsistent use of referral criteria to dietetic services and a lack of specific clinical guidelines and patient resources. Further training for all clinicians and earlier recognition of malnutrition, alongside investment in the role of

dietitians were recommended to improve the nutritional care of those with HG.

[A systematic review of effects, potentialities, and limitations of nutritional interventions aimed at managing obesity in primary and secondary health care](#), 2020

Most trials presented better weight loss results with the association of calorie restrictions and theory-based interventions delivered by dietitians or psychologists.

[The tension between efficiency and effectiveness: a study of dietetic practice in primary care](#), 2019 *Abstract only\**

Achieving a balance between efficiency and effectiveness in primary care dietetics is challenging to practitioners, who may require further training and support to enhance productivity, time management and resource utilisation. Structured issues exist for the workforce.

### Role progression and development

[Trends, challenges, opportunities, and future needs of the dietetic workforce: a systematic scoping review](#), 2022 *Abstract only\**

The following 13 themes were identified: 1) emerging or expanding areas of practice; 2) skill development; 3) economic considerations; 4) nutrition informatics; 5) diversity within the workforce; 6) specific areas of practice; 7) further education; 8) intrapersonal factors; 9) perceptions of the profession; 10) protecting the scope of practice; 11) support systems; 12) employment outcomes; and 13) registration or credentialing.

[The role of dietetics accreditation standards in supporting practice-ready graduates – a policy analysis](#), 2022

There is a unified purpose of accreditation internationally which may support global mobility of the dietetics workforce. Focusing

more on outcome-based standards may support the development of dietetics graduates better equipped to meet future needs.

[Enablers and barriers to progressing a clinical academic career in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions: A cross-sectional survey](#), 2022

Robust evidence is central to practice and professional decision making of NMAHPs, with generation and translation of research arguably best led by those clinically active. Whilst countries like the UK and USA have fellowship schemes to support research career development, anecdotal reports suggest barriers exist in translating these opportunities into sustainable clinical academic careers.

[Studying the transition from graduate to health practitioner: The Griffith Dietetics Graduate Outcomes Survey](#), 2021 *Abstract only\**

Key themes included the importance of networking to gain employment, willingness to relocate to rural areas, the need to persevere, and the need for supported career development. These findings can be used to inform dietetic education and workforce preparation.

[Knowledge Translation in Dietetics: A Survey of Dietitians' Awareness and Confidence](#), 2020 *Abstract only\**

Lack of management support, difficulty attending multi-day courses, cost, travel requirements, and lack of quarantined time were reported barriers to attending KT training. There is a high awareness and interest but low confidence in undertaking KT amongst dietitians. This highlights an opportunity for workforce development to prepare dietitians to be skilled and confident in KT.

[Digital disruption of dietetics: are we ready?](#) 2020 *Abstract only\**

It is imperative that dietitians stay abreast of these technological developments and be the leaders of the disruption, not simply subject to it. By doing so, dietitians now, as well as in the future, will maximise their impact and continue to champion evidence-based nutrition practice.

### [Capitalising on the transformational opportunities of early clinical academic career training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals](#), 2020 *Abstract only*\*

Stakeholders need to recognise that a cultural shift about the purposes of research training from a transactional to transformative approaches is required to facilitate the development of NMAHPS clinical academics, to enable them to contribute to innovative health and patient care.

### [Challenges in preparing the dietetics workforce of the future: An exploration of dietetics educators' experiences](#), 2019 *Abstract only*\*

Dietetics educators are motivated to shape and enhance the future profession. However, they face numerous challenges in their efforts to prepare graduates who are well-equipped for increasingly diverse dietetics practice. Strong leadership, academic collaboration and greater engagement of the broader workforce are required for the benefit of the entire profession.

### [Workplace learning and career progression: qualitative perspectives of UK dietitians](#), 2018 *Abstract only*\*

Dietitians engage with Work Place Learning (WPL) differently across their careers. Future visions of WPL, especially explicit post-graduate career and education frameworks, must accommodate these differences to retain the highest calibre dietitians. The implications of a period of learning 'maintenance' rather than CPD among experienced dietitians offers a topic for further research, particularly as the workforce ages.

## Workforce perspectives and mental health

### [Joining the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic: views of Allied Health Profession students](#), 2022 *Abstract only*\*

Content analysis regarding students' anticipations, fears, and support needs identified the following themes: professional identity and growth; opportunities for improvement; preparedness for transition from university to the workplace, the workplace environment; COVID-19; support from lecturers; daily support within the workplace and innovative methods of support.

### [Wellbeing and coping of UK nurses, midwives and allied health professionals during COVID-19-a cross-sectional study](#), 2022

This workforce would benefit from additional support/services to prevent further deterioration in mental health and wellbeing and optimise workforce retention.

### [Experiences and perceptions of dietitians for obesity management: a general practice qualitative study](#), 2021 *Abstract only*\*

The present study aimed to explore general practice healthcare professionals' (GPHCPs) experiences and perceptions of dietitians in the context of obesity management. GPHCPs perceived that embedding a dietitian within their general practice team would be valuable and beneficial for obesity management. Our findings provide support for the funding of general practice dietitian roles in the UK.

### [Preparing our future workforce: a qualitative exploration of dietetics practice educators' experiences](#), 2019

Despite facing numerous challenges, practice educators derive benefits from their role in workforce preparation. Evidence is required on how students can demonstrate competence in

contemporary areas of practice and on how to enable the scope of student placements to be broadened.

[Preparedness for advancing future health: a national qualitative exploration of dietetics graduates' experiences](#), 2019 *Abstract only*\*

Graduates were challenged by the competitive landscape of securing obvious job opportunities and by a lack of support in transitioning into the workforce. Practice exposures and encounters with influential dietitians were highly valued.

### Diversity and inclusion

[Evolving Beyond the World Foods Course: Creating Racially and Ethnically Inclusive Educational Spaces for Dietetics Students](#), 2022 *Abstract only*\*

This paper reviews key terminology related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of dietetics education, and describes a new framework to transform dietetics education based on the principles of cultural humility and culturally sustaining teaching.

[“Raising the curtain on the equality theatre”: a study of recruitment to first healthcare job post-qualification in the UK National Health Service](#), 2022

The Healthcare Workforce Equity + Diversity Lens we have developed can help to ‘raise the curtain on the equality theatre’ and inform more inclusive approaches to recruitment such as contextualised recruitment or effective allyship between employers and universities.

[A social media intervention for dietetics professionals to increase awareness about racial/ethnic diversity and inclusion in dietetics: Black voices centered](#) 2021

Results of this sub-study offer insight into the Black experience in dietetics as well as ways the Academy can improve diversity and inclusion within its organization and membership.

[Do images of dietitians on the Internet reflect the profession?](#) 2020 *Abstract only*\*

The images resulting from an online search for ‘dietitian’ do not fully illustrate the profession. There are opportunities to create and share authentic images online that show the breadth of work roles and diversity of professionals’ age, gender, cultural background and size.

[Strategies and Recommendations to Increase Diversity in Dietetics](#), 2019 *Abstract only*\*

As the population in the United States becomes more diverse, health professions in the country require a diverse workforce to ensure proper and more personalized care for patients. Currently, whites account for more than 80% of the health professional workforce, whereas minorities are underrepresented in the field.

## Competency Frameworks

[Dietetic Competency Framework](#) (British Dietetic Association) Welcome to the 2021 BDA Diabetes Specialist Group Dietetic Competency Framework for Dietitians Working in the Area of Diabetes.

[Post Registration Professional Development Framework](#) (BDA) Dietitians are likely to use the framework alongside a preceptorship programme during the Entry Level stage.

[Development of a digital competency framework for UK Allied Health Professionals](#), 2020

This framework has been developed to support the enhancement of digital competence (knowledge and skills associated with digital technology in practice) for all allied health professions from band 3 to band 9. It is intended to be a developmental and supportive tool that can enable all staff to meet their digital potential.

### **\*Help accessing articles or papers**

Where a report/ journal article or resource is freely available the link has been provided. If an NHS OpenAthens account is required this has been indicated. It has also been highlighted if only the abstract is available. If you do not have an OpenAthens account you can self-register here.

If you need help accessing an article, or have any other questions, contact the Knowledge Management team for support [KnowledgeManagement@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:KnowledgeManagement@hee.nhs.uk)