

BDA

Volunteer Corner

Vicky Dagnan explains what she has got out of volunteering with the Learning Disabilities Sub Group

Volunteer Name: Vicky Dagnan

Place of work: Dudley Integrated Care NHS Trust

Position: Primary Care Dietitian

BDA volunteer role: Resources Officer – Learning Disabilities Sub Group

Q How did you get started volunteering with the BDA?

A I joined as a member of the Mental Health Specialist Group back in 2021 to gain access to what was then the Learning Disabilities Special Interest Group. I was keen to connect with other dietitians working in this area for support and advice. I attended a few of the online meetings and case study sessions and was energised by the passion within the group to raise awareness of dietitians working in this area. In 2022, through the drive and determination of Briony Caffrey (Chair) the Learning Disabilities Sub Group was founded and I knew I wanted to be part of it.

Briefly describe your BDA volunteer role

A As the Resources Officer, I will be working with the committee and its members to consider the use of current resources: how we plan, develop, and coordinate resources in this area to support group members and those working with disabilities in practice. As part of a newly formed committee, I will also be raising awareness of membership, supporting other committee members, and continuing the work of highlighting the role of dietitians working in learning disabilities, championing nutrition and dietetics within primary care, and to the wider AHP primary care community.

Q What's the best thing about volunteering for the BDA?

A I have met some fantastic colleagues through the Learning Disabilities Sub Group who share a passion for advocating evidence-based practice, service improvement and increased accessibility to dietitians for people with a learning disability. I get to be part of a committee that will be improving access to events, resources, training and awareness for all dietitians, not just those working in learning disabilities, and that feels like progress! I also got to visit the BDA head office, which was a real treat, nestled into the bustling Birmingham city centre!

Q What didn't you know about the BDA before you started volunteering?

A Apart from the impressive offices...I was not aware the variety of volunteer opportunities on offer to get involved with the BDA for many specialist groups and sub groups within them. I was also not aware of the bounty of resources available through the website, including the BDA App Library of health and care apps that can be searched, downloaded and recommended to patients and carers, and a whole host of practice and education resources that support digital and remote working.

Q Would you encourage other members to volunteer for the BDA?

A I would recommend that dietitians, newly qualified or more experienced, get involved and volunteer for the BDA. I have a brand-new awareness and affiliation with the trade union, into which I have been paying membership since 2014. It has become much more than just a resource to download Food Fact Sheets! So, reach out to a specialist group or sub group that you want to work with and look at volunteering opportunities on the BDA website or in *Dietetics Today*. You don't have to have specific skills or knowledge – there is lots of support available.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Why not check out our volunteer opportunities online: bda.uk.com/news-campaigns/get-involved/volunteers.html and look out for vacancies in our Members' Monthly e-zine.