BDA
The Association of UK Dietitians

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) stands as the singular voice representing the entire dietetic workforce in the UK. As both a trade union and a professional body, we champion the professional, educational, public, and workplace interests of our members.

We fervently advocate for our members' priorities, which are instrumental in the improvement of public health and nutrition. We implore all parliamentary candidates to strongly consider, for future implementation, the following policies for the prosperity and health of our nation.

We call on the UK government to:

- Extend free school meal provision to all primary school children
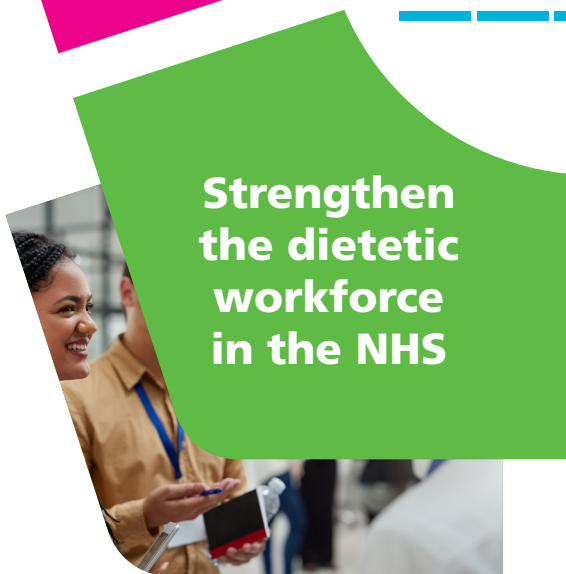- Develop a comprehensive UK Food Strategy
- Commit to fair pay for NHS dietitians
- Strengthen the dietetic workforce in the NHS
- Extend independent prescribing rights to dietitians nationwide

We call on the UK government to:

Extend free school meal provision to all primary school children

- Existing limitations expose numerous young people to malnutrition and food insecurity, detrimentally affecting their health, education, and prospects.

- Universal access to nutritious meals will confront health disparities, financial stigmatisation and further alleviate the financial burdens faced by so many families. This action is critical in shaping healthier and more equitable generations to come.

Develop a comprehensive UK Food Strategy

- Recognising the multifaceted nature of health impacts, we are calling for a cross-government and cross-department strategy which addresses complexities. Efforts should also be united across agriculture, retail, and health sectors to improve access to nutritious food, promote environmental sustainability, and address the root causes of food inequalities.

- Further fiscal measures should be implemented to support the sale of healthier food and drinks. Revenue generated from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy should fund programmes to support children's health and access to nutritious food, such as school breakfast clubs, healthy start vouchers, and breastfeeding support.

- With marketing playing a pivotal role in what, and how much, children eat, regulations need to be put in place to protect children from junk food advertising and support and promoting healthier food options.

Extend independent prescribing rights to dietitians nationwide

- Dietitians are the experts in their field. It should be an obvious advantage to the NHS that they have the facility to independently prescribe, however GPs are currently the gatekeepers to this care.

- By granting dietitians the autonomy to prescribe essential medications and treatments, we will elevate health and social care delivery standards, optimise patient/service user outcomes, and fully unleash the potential of dietitians within the NHS.

Strengthen the dietetic workforce in the NHS

- The shortage of NHS staff, inclusive of dietitians, directly impacts delivery of quality care.

- To nurture a strong and empowered workforce we need to remove barriers that hinder career progression, improve recruitment and retention, and recognise the crucial work dietitians do within the NHS, social care, and education.

- Investing in training, career development, and acknowledging the pivotal role of dietitians are essential steps towards building a resilient workforce.
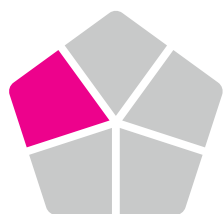
Commit to fair pay for NHS dietitians

- Dietitians make monumental contributions to public health, patient and service user care, and our health and social care systems, which are profound but often undervalued.

- Offering fair compensation not only recognises their unwavering dedication but also secures the retention of talent within the NHS, ensuring continuity and excellence in healthcare provision.

The BDA urges politicians to take immediate action in implementing policies to address these pressing issues. A sincere commitment to our comprehensive priorities will significantly impact public health, reduce disparities, and properly acknowledge the invaluable role of dietitians in safeguarding the wellbeing of our nation.

Find out what you can do: bda.uk.com/campaigns