

Dietitian

Dietitians translate the science of nutrition into everyday information about food.

This page has information on the role of a dietitian with links to further information.

Working life

You'll advise people and help them make informed and practical choices about their food and nutrition. You'll assess, diagnose and treat dietary and nutritional problems. You'll also teach and inform the public and health professionals about diet and nutrition. Your aim is to promote good health and prevent disease in individuals and communities.

Dietitians are skilled at translating scientific and medical research related to food and health into practical guidance for the general public.

In the NHS, you'll work in hospitals or in the community. However, outside the NHS, dietitians also work in the food industry, education, sport, media, public relations, publishing or research. Some work on a freelance basis.

You'll work with individuals and communities with both healthy and sick people.

You could, for example, work with people who:

- have digestive problems
- want to lose weight
- need to put on weight after an illness
- have HIV
- have an eating disorder
- want to improve their sports performance
- have an allergy.

As well as working with other health professionals and nutritionists, you may supervise the work of dietetic assistants ^[1]. Dietitians and nutritionists have different roles and training and are regulated by different bodies.

Want to learn more?

- [Find out more on the entry requirements and training for dietetics](#) ^[2]
- [Find out more about the work and training of nutritionists](#) ^[3]
- Pay and conditions [Expand](#) / [Collapse](#)

Most dietitians in the NHS work standard hours, which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. They will usually start at band 5 of the Agenda for Change pay scale. [4]

Dietitians working elsewhere such as the food industry, the media or sports nutrition may work normal office hours of around 9.00am to 5.00pm. They may however have to work evenings or weekends according to the needs of the employer.

Self-employed dietitians hours of work depend on client needs. They may work evenings and weekends to suit private clients.

Some dietitians may have to travel between client appointments.

- Where the role can lead Expand / Collapse

In February 2017, there were 9.069 dietitians registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [5].

Once qualified, dietitians often join the British Dietetic Association [6]. Registered dietitians have to keep their skills and knowledge up to date with annual CPD (continuing professional development). BDA runs courses, conferences and seminars where dietitians can exchange ideas and update their skills.

Within the NHS, you could specialise in a clinical area, such as cancer or diabetes. Or you could work with particular groups, such as elderly people or those with learning difficulties. Teaching and health education are also options. You could take on a management role where you would supervise the work of a team of dietitians. Eventually, you could be responsible for controlling a budget and planning and marketing a dietetic service.

Elsewhere, you could specialise in for example, sports nutrition or an area of the food industry. Some dietitians use their training and experience to move into areas such as publishing, sales, media, PR, government or non-governmental organisations.

There may be opportunities to work overseas.

- Job market and vacancies Expand / Collapse

The British Dietetic Association lists jobs on BDA [7] [8] Jobs [7]

Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on NHS Jobs [9]. Some advertise on trust websites. You can find a list of trusts on NHS Choices [10].

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by the NHS.

Find out more about NHS values. [11]

- Further information Expand / Collapse

- [The British Dietetic Association](#) [12]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Nutritionist](#) [13]
- [Dietetic assistant](#) [14]
- [Occupational therapist](#) [15]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) [16]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/dietitian>

Links

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- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [5] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>
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