

Megan Jones

Megan is based in East Cheshire and is also a Dietetic Support Worker representative on the Board of directors for the British Dietetic Association (BDA). Read below Megan's case study.

My role allows me to assess patients' nutritional intake, and make changes to a patient menu, enabling them to meet special dietary needs. I enjoy being able to work 1-1 with patients; learning about their dietary preferences and hearing stories of their lives, I felt I have been able to make a positive impact on their inpatient stay. This became even more important during COVID and the restricted visiting times, but to know that my input and discussion with the patient could make a positive change to their day is a nice feeling.

The role appealed to me particularly as I was able to apply my knowledge from my nutrition degree in a clinical setting, without needing to go back to university to retrain as a dietitian. There was also a big focus on training and support which I felt right from my interview, so to see this at such an early stage was very promising for the role.

Medical terminology courses and training with the paediatric dietitians has enabled me to expand my knowledge of paediatric dietetics. This has allowed me to deliver Cows Milk Protein Allergy group sessions to new parents and their babies, leading to reduced clinic waiting times. Other training has involved being on the wards with patients and completing dietetic reviews of patients. Reviewing a patient's requirements and ensuring a patient gets the right nutrition for them to recover or make their hospital stay a little more comfortable is really rewarding.

The project I am most proud of is changing the way we fortify patient meals. This project involved nutritional and cost analysis of different supplements, as well as taste testing to check palatability and suitability for our catering department. By changing the supplement used to a milk powder, we have been able to improve the nutritional content of fortified patient meals, as well as reduce costs for the trust by over 50 per cent.

Being an AHP allows you to develop your skills and work within a supportive team. I feel valued by my team and they always push me to challenge myself within my role but always with their support and encouragement. I never feel like I have to work on my own, and they are always very respectful of where my knowledge and training boundaries are. If you are looking to be part of an amazing team of Allied Health Professionals, then being a support worker is a great opportunity.