



# The Nottingham "Future Dietitian" Project: development of a 2-week non-clinical practice learning opportunity.



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## Introduction

- The British Dietetic Association (BDA) "Future Dietitian 2025" project identified the need to train professionally-agile dietitians who adapt and innovate in changing environments.
- Embracing advances in technology enables students to optimise emerging opportunities including practice learning within a diverse range of settings.
- Within dietetics, healthcare based clinical placements have historically provided the sole setting for professional development throughout the course.



## Aim

- To establish a process by which all third-year students would experience a non-traditional 2-week practice learning block, within one 12-week practice education block.
- The develop a database of new Practice-based learning sites, reflecting the diversity of the working environments including research, public health, industry, third sector.

## Placement pool development

- A range of 20 new placement opportunities were identified.
- Staff were approached, then trained and added to database.
- Light touch quality assurance was put in place prior to students selecting and embarking on the experience.
- The number and pool of settings enabled some student choice.
- Students completed a range of tasks and projects, selected by the placement lead, reflecting the diversity of roles.
- University staff provided long arm supervision.

### Placements include Public Health:

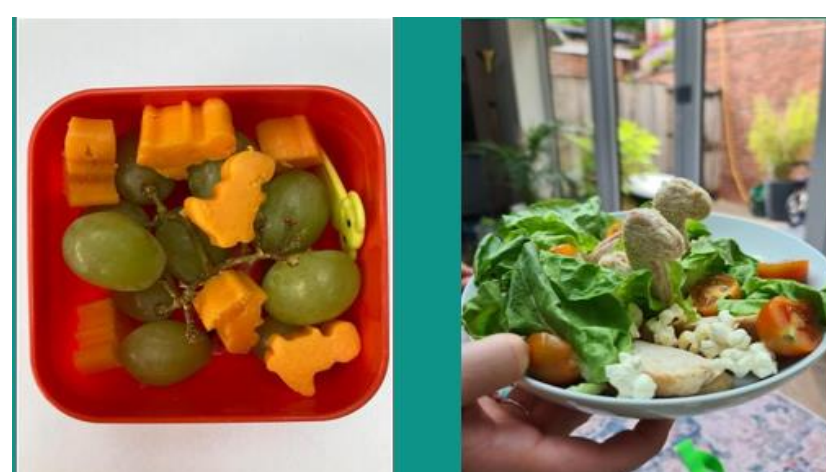
Momenta Newcastle  
 Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre  
 Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

### Freelance/Private companies:

The Dietary Edit  
 Fenland Paediatric Dietitian  
 Food Allergy Nottingham Service Ltd  
 Juliet Wilson Nutrition  
 Nutrition4Kids  
 Slimming World  
 Sunlight Nutrition

### Charities:

FareShare, Food for Purpose, Guts UK



## Result

- All students progressed through the 2-week block (summer 2022 and 2023).
- A small number of assessment tools documented progress, mainly organisation and personal leadership, professionalism and communication skills in various modes.
- Additional student and staff resources were developed to ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach.

## Outcomes and Impact

- Evaluation feedback from practice educators indicated good and very good levels of satisfaction with the process.
- Support from the university placement team and the students' strong knowledge and professional approach were rated outstanding.
- External examiner feedback- "The placement team has innovated a 12-week B placement to include a 2-week complimentary placement. This is a huge undertaking, demonstrating a significant amount of time and work... this fully aligns with the BDA Future Dietitian vision and contributes to the overall employability of graduates."

Student evaluation was predominantly very positive. Comments included:

"I experienced so much in the time that now I can imagine not working in a hospital".

"I feel I learnt a lot during my complimentary placement on the importance of social media marketing and providing suitable dietetic resources."

"I was able to improve my knowledge... my supervisors were very knowledgeable about how to make resources that would be appropriate for the target audience."



## Conclusion

- The inclusion and effective embedding of a non-traditional, compulsory practice education enhanced our dietetic students experience.
- The model has been positively embraced by both students and clinical practice educator leads.

## Reference

<https://www.bda.uk.com/practice-and-education/education/pre-registration.html>