

# Future-Ready Dietitians: Recruitment and Development Across the Career Journey



**Karin Russell & Elisabeth Waterhouse**  
Dietetic Department, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

## Introduction

NHS GGC dietetic service have over 250 staff members (band 3 – 8c), with 21 band 5 dietitians and an average of 45 pre-registration learners per year from three Higher Education Institutions across Scotland.

Practice Development Dietitians (PDDs) play a pivotal role in future-proofing the dietetic workforce. NHS GGC has seven Band 7 registered dietitians working with a PDD remit across acute, community, paediatric and health and social care partnerships, each specialising in different clinical areas. These practitioners previously worked independently but joined forces in 2022 to form a collaboration to support practitioners across all aspects of dietetics with professional development and career progression. However, with increasing service demands and workforce challenges, PDD must create innovative strategies to attract, prepare, and retain skilled practitioners across the career continuum.

## Aim

By December 2025, PDDs will increase available opportunities to support individuals to engage in workforce initiatives supporting career development across the entire professional pathway by 25%.



## Method

A multi-faceted approach was implemented to strengthen recruitment and professional development pathways within dietetics.

- **Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) engagement:** Participation in school-based events to raise awareness of dietetics as a career option.
- **Pre-university / registration preparation:** Development of online and in person sessions to support prospective learners in understanding academic and professional expectations. Interactive tutorials for current practice placement learners to enhance readiness for employment.
- **Career signposting:** Development of accessible resources for staff currently employed and those on practice placement within the service (NES, 2024).
- **Return-to-practice candidates:** Supportive structure to those wishing to return to practice after a prolonged career break (HCPC, 2025)



Fig 1.1: Dietetic stall and staff at STEM event November 2024



Fig 1.2: Screenshot of an online lunchbox learning session on advancing practice in September 2025



Fig 1.3: Dietetic stall and staff at STEM event October 2024



Fig 1.4: QR code for presentation on feedback from the Dietetic Clinical Governance Day, May 2024.



## Results

Between June 2024 and December 2025, PDDs **Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) engagement**

- Attended six STEM events (previously none)

### Pre-university/ registration preparation

Activity	Delivery	Volume	Evaluation / Reach	Key Outcome
Online 'Get Ready For' programme	Online	Programme developed	Scheduled to run in 2026 (postponed in 2025)	Improved early engagement and preparation for prospective dietetic applicants
Pre-registration practice placement support	Practice-based learning	67 learners supported	75% reported a good-quality learning experience	Supported placement quality and learner experience across GGC dietetics
Recruitment tutorials for placement learners	Interactive tutorials	6 sessions	Session experience rated 5.33 / 6	Enhanced readiness for recruitment through peer insight, interview tips and job-seeking guidance

Table 1: Pre university/ registration preparation activities

### Career signposting

- Launch of a continuing professional development catalogue signposting staff to resources to develop across all pillars of practice, with 61 viewers in 14 days

Activity	Delivery	Number	Attendance / Reach	Key Outcome
Pan-service clinical governance networking event	Face-to-face	1 event	133 attendees (Bands 3–8)	Enabled cross-service networking, shared learning, and workforce engagement
Pan-service Lunchbox Learning education sessions	Online (live + recorded)	9 sessions	Mean 44 live attendees (range 26–82); mean 18 post-event views (range 0–31)	Replaced ad hoc specialty sessions with a coordinated once-for-service approach
Pan-service nutritional representative sessions	Online	3 sessions	Mean 47 live attendees (range 34–62)	Improved consistency and equitable access to information across services

Table 2: Career development/signposting activities

### Return-to-practice candidates

- Supported one return to practice practitioner across different speciality teams. Previously supported one in community dietetics in 2024.

### Discussion:

The goal of increasing available opportunities were increase by over 25% with new initiatives being launched and the collaboration of PDDs from different clinical areas has allowed 'once for GGC' approach. Ongoing consideration of interactive delivery and integration of digital resources aligns with modern educational preferences and supports inclusivity. Challenges include ensuring resources remain current.

## Conclusion

PDD-led initiatives can strengthen workforce sustainability by supporting different models of learning through a combination of outreach, preparatory education, and targeted professional development. These strategies can contribute to securing a resilient dietetic workforce equipped for evolving healthcare needs.