

Adelle Tulip

Dietetic Apprentice



My current role

I am currently working as a Dietetic Assistant Practitioner within the Paediatric team for 4 years whilst also completing my Dietetic Apprenticeship, which I started in May 2023. My main role includes reviewing children in clinic up to the age of 18 years old who have difficulty in achieving their nutrition and hydration requirements. In clinic, I see a lot of children with Autism/being assessed for Autism/ADHD, nutrition support, fussy eating, restricted diets, nutritional deficiencies, weight management, epilepsy and more recently patients awaiting a diagnosis of ARFID or who have a diagnosis of ARFID.

I also liaise with the oral nutritional supplement sample reps, and complete account changes on the Nutricia Homeward system for children who are tube fed. I have a previous degree in Sports Science at Durham University which provided me with pre-requisite skills and knowledge for my current role.

A closer look at my typical day

My working days are Monday and Wednesday 0830-1630 which includes one face to face clinic. My placement days are Thursday and Fridays 0830-1630 in the community team (HEF, Neuro, Oncology and Diabetes). Every Tuesday is spent at university doing lectures until the degree finishes in March 2026. I work closely with Consultant Paediatricians, Nurses, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, School teachers, Social Workers, Safeguarding teams, Psychologists, Counsellors/Therapists, carers and many more. A lot of the patients I see in clinic are malnourished, so I liaise with schools to ensure patients are allowed extra snacks at school to meet their nutritional requirements. I also advise GPs on blood tests to ensure there are no nutritional deficiencies such as folate, anaemia, b12, vitamin d and sometimes request GPs to prescribe supplements to assist with weight gain.

My developing interest in mental health dietetics

I started my dietetic assistant role in October 2020. When the opportunity to undertake a dietetic apprenticeship presented, I applied and was successful, commencing in May 2023. Within my assistant role, I completed a lot of webinars to learn how to manage 'fussy eaters' and neurodivergent patients. During these webinars, I started to find out about ARFID, with a lot of these patients being transferred to my care for nutrition support and were showing signs of ARFID. I could see the genuine fear in the children's eyes and this was how my specialist interest started. I hope to complete my dissertation on ARFID later in the BSc Dietetic Apprenticeship. I am also due to complete my last placement in final year of study at the Mental Health Trust CNTW, which will develop my understanding of Mental Health within Dietetics.

"Patients and parents were listening more to me and feeling acknowledged and supported in their dietetic care. A lot of my patient feedback was the advice and support they were offered by me was appropriate and successful. The more this occurred, the more I became interested"

The thing I'm most proud of

I am super proud of being able to assess and monitor paediatric ARFID patients from doing webinars and study day events. The patients and parents I see in clinic always offer positive feedback that my support has helped them progress and it makes the job so worth it. I recently shared a success story with the BDA ARFID subgroup from a child who was willing to share her own video which demonstrated how my intervention for her ARFID diagnosis was effective and appropriate. She was able to learn more about ARFID herself and how it affects her day to day. She has since started using ear defenders and trying new foods at her own pace with encouragement and support from her immediate family.

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How I want my future to look

To be an ARFID/eating disorder dietitian for children in the North East and possibly a Dietitian lecturer once I have the experience and expertise.

A key piece of advice for anyone considering a dietetic apprenticeship role

Consider all aspects of training. It is very tough to manage time wisely with a full-time job, a degree, a social life, family/pets/children, holidays and healthcare. Plan well in advance, be organised with paperwork, have diaries with important dates, and have a strong support network. If you do this, you are sure to succeed!

Final thoughts?

Do pre-reading! Science is hard. Have confidence in yourself to do it. Take constructive criticism as positive feedback not negative. If you want to be a dietitian, take the leap!

