



# BDA

## Volunteer Corner

**Belinda Mortell** explains how her varied volunteering work has given her confidence

Volunteer Name: **Belinda Mortell**

Place of work: **Reacta Healthcare**

Position: **Business Development Manager**

BDA Volunteer role: **Chair of North West North Wales Branch**

### Q How did you get started volunteering with the BDA and why?

**A** I had attended a BDA event and I was talking to Fiona McCullough (then current Chair) and she encouraged me to consider volunteering as part of the BDA Marketing and Communications Board. I applied and was successful, much to my surprise. I think it is important to be an active member of your professional body, otherwise what is the point of the BDA working in isolation from members who don't engage? There should be a collaborative relationship where members work with the association to enhance, protect and promote the profession for us all.

### Briefly describe your BDA volunteer role(s)

**A** I started as a member of committee with the North West North Wales (NWNW) local branch. I then became a member of the Marketing and Communications Board and then Chair. After gradually building up the branch committee I moved on and got involved with the England Board (I live on the border between England and Wales). However, at the time it was the England Board that was struggling with a small committee and so I volunteered to help gain interest and get it going again. I then became Deputy Chair. I have since stepped down, as the committee has a strong diverse membership, thanks to fantastic leadership from Julie Abayomi, and a great, enthusiastic, talented committee. Realising the local branch once again needed picking up and re-creating, at the end of 2022 I took the Chair role of the NWNW branch and recruited with the support of Roy Bustin at the BDA.

### Q What's the best thing/s about volunteering for the BDA?

**A** When I first became a BDA member, I had a serious inferiority complex! I had changed careers and was 'only' a band 5 NHS dietitian. Starting volunteering really helped me understand dietetics and what the bigger picture was; it very much helped me with professional confidence and leadership in healthcare. I had come from a completely different background in finance, where I never had imposter syndrome. Volunteering provided me with a new network outside of my job, especially as I was based

in a corner of North Wales, with few professional networking opportunities. I've met some great people, and I am very proud of what dietitians do and that I am member of the BDA.

### Q What didn't you know about the BDA before you started volunteering?

**A** I had no idea how it worked, as I had not been involved with a professional association before. Who the BDA was, was a mystery – I didn't know where they were based, how many people worked for them or what they did. I had no idea of all the work that happens behind the scenes. Some of the first projects I heard about were Future Dietitian and the start of Primary Care Dietitians. Both have made, and will continue to make, a significant impact on members development opportunities, the health economy and the health of the UK population.

### Q Would you encourage other members to volunteer for the BDA?

**A** I would encourage everyone to consider volunteering. There are lots of options, which take varying amounts of time. For those wanting to start small, writing articles for DT is a great way to start, or applying for a smaller role on branch or specialist group committees. Start looking out for opportunities on the BDA website and start taking the time to read the e-zines and DT – there is always a call for help. I love seeing new faces and hearing about new projects happening all over the UK.

Volunteering is great for career development. It is helpful as something different to chat about at interviews, broadens your CV, and provides an instant network of peers working in a diverse range of roles. And it makes you feel good about yourself, helps you get the most out of your career and connects with your professional community.

#### WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Why not check out our volunteer opportunities online: [bda.uk.com/news-campaigns/get-involved/volunteers.html](https://bda.uk.com/news-campaigns/get-involved/volunteers.html) and look out for vacancies in our Members' Monthly ezine.