

## Why do I want to do all this work?

I love being an Ambassador because I'm producing something positive out of my evil anorexia and the past 3 awful years. Working with the EDA gives me a purpose in life. I want to help other sufferers and try to make people understand my illness and other eating disorders. Eating disorders should not be stigmatised.

I've had the opportunity to do amazing things-speak at House of Commons, meetings with my local MP and journalists, hosting my own live chat and editing Talkback (EDAS magazine for young people). I'm starting to be proud of myself. It gives me the chance to have a say, you can't sit around complaining and not taking action! I feel involved, especially when assisting EDA to improve their services.

There are many benefits. I'm starting to regain my confidence because I've had to give presentations in front of many professionals. I've made some great friends too who understand what I'm going through immediately. We support each other through the bad times. You may not realise how lonely it is to be suffering from an eating disorder. No one in your family or any of your close friends can comprehend your behaviour, rituals or why it seems the end of the world when you gain 2 pounds in one week. Other sufferers do though.

Plus most of the other ambassadors are recovered which gives me the hope that one day I will beat this illness too.

We don't just talk about eating disorders either-they are my friends as well as those who work at EDA.

I just want to improve services and promote awareness across the NHS, education, politics, media and society. Being an ambassador gives me this chance.

By Rachel Cowey