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# An Update from BAPEN

**I can't believe it is time for my second column for Complete Nutrition! 2019 is flying already, and much has been happening in the world of clinical nutrition and malnutrition awareness that I would like to add my perspective on.**

## Minister for Hunger

In January, the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) (a cross-party committee chaired by Mary Creagh MP) published a report 'Sustainable Development Goals in the UK follow up: Hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in the UK' in which they recommend appointing a dedicated Minister for Hunger.

The EAC is calling for the creation of a Ministerial role to focus on the issues that arise specifically from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition across the UK.

Whilst food insecurity is a significant and growing issue in the UK and the EAC report rightly focuses on the social and economic determinants of malnutrition, we believe it is important to highlight that not all malnutrition is a result of poverty. The EAC report uses BAPEN figures indicating that the number of undernourished people in the UK is estimated to be three million. However, in our statement on the report publication we pointed out that a large proportion of these will be disease-related rather than poverty-related. We are very much supportive of the call for a dedicated Minister, this would be an important commitment. For us it will remain important to communicate the message that in order to combat malnutrition in all its forms, there needs to be a structured approach to screening and care planning across all health and social care settings.

## Patients' Association Nutrition Checklist

In recent months we have been sharing our support for the work of the Patients' Association, which recently published a report, 'Pilot projects to Develop and Evaluate the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist'. It is extremely encouraging to us that this leading patient organisation is focusing efforts on raising awareness and providing support to those in the community and in clinical settings who are at risk of malnutrition.

The Nutrition Checklist is compatible with our own Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool ('MUST'), and while it is not intended to replace 'MUST', it has the potential to be used to triage or identify those people who would benefit from further screening and advice. I really hope there is wide uptake of the Checklist in all settings, we certainly intend to promote it's use alongside 'MUST' and our Malnutrition Self-Screening Tool, and I am looking forward to working alongside the Patients Association throughout 2019 to bring our nutritional messages to a wider audience.

## Getting involved with BAPEN

We are always on the lookout for new BAPEN members to help us have a louder voice. Many of you will be members of our Core Groups and as such eligible for free BAPEN membership, which I would strongly encourage you to take up! With benefits ranging from discounted rates for conferences to opportunities for educational activities on both national and local levels, there are many reasons why you should join us. Have a look

on our website for more details. We had a hugely successful 2018, marked by our very first UK Malnutrition Awareness Week, which is going to be even bigger and better this year, so now is an exciting time to become part of the BAPEN community and we look forward to welcoming you.

We were recently encouraging our social media followers to apply for ESPEN (European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism) membership, I hope many of you had the chance to sign up before this year's deadline passed. If you are not familiar with ESPEN I would urge you to look at what they do. While BAPEN's attention is primarily focused on these shores, we benefit significantly from keeping in touch with our European counterparts as well as those further afield. I am a strong believer in sharing best practice, and think we can all benefit from doing that, both 'at home' and 'away'.

I have been hugely encouraged to see the BAPEN social media community growing so much over recent months. It provides the perfect forum for the sharing of knowledge and ideas and it is an excellent way of signposting colleagues to events and resources too. It can also be hugely fun and a good way to get people inspired. It was great to see a snap recently of the community dietetics team at North West Boroughs Healthcare receiving their 'Team of the Month' award for October last year, in recognition of the work they did for Malnutrition Awareness Week. At BAPEN HQ we probably wouldn't have been aware of that if it wasn't for the wonders of social media! Hopefully this kind of social visibility will encourage other teams to get involved and then share their successes for everyone to see!

Our social community also affords us the opportunity to pay tribute to individuals who have made a unique contribution to the world of clinical nutrition. We were delighted earlier this year to join in with the very many others wishing Dr Ruth McKee a well-earned retirement! From a quick review of the comments on social media it is clear that Dr McKee has made a huge impact on very many colleagues. From BAPEN's perspective, she has been extremely influential as a surgeon who has always recognised the importance of good nutrition and the value of what we do at BAPEN. We hope that many of those inspired by Dr McKee's achievements will follow in her footsteps and similarly champion nutrition within surgical teams.

## Belfast here we come

Just a final note from me to mark in your diaries the dates of our BAPEN conference on November 26th and 27th this year. We are delighted to be heading to the ICC in Belfast, a fabulous city that is remarkably easy to get to. In 2018 it was voted Top Place to Visit and Best Events Destination, so it's clearly not one to miss! I look forward to sharing more details about the conference programme in my next column and look forward to seeing you there!

For further information visit: [www.bapen.org.uk](http://www.bapen.org.uk)

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