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# BAPEN Update

## Almost my last Complete Nutrition column of the year! Where is 2019 going! I have much to update you on, it's been a busy autumn!

### UK Malnutrition Awareness Week

October 14th – 20th marked our second ever UK Malnutrition Awareness Week (MAW), and what a week it was too!

We were delighted to join forces again with the Malnutrition Task Force (MTF) on the week's activities. We have a long-standing relationship with the MTF and it is one that we think works particularly well together. When we sit down and work out our 'mission' for MAW we find real common ground between our two organisations, but also complementary interests that make for a successful partnership. While the MTF focuses on fighting malnutrition amongst older people, our remit is inevitably much wider and crosses age groups, but our shared ownership of the week allows both of our organisations to communicate key messages.

We were absolutely thrilled to have the support of many other organisations who gave us their endorsement, and supported our work throughout the week. It does feel as though, in this second year, we have really gained substantial momentum.

And then I must say, the efforts of the nutrition community, were extraordinary! There was an avalanche of social media posts! How exciting it is to see the genuine passion of so many health and social care professionals, not to mention the wider community workforce, all so determined to make a difference.

There were some really exciting new developments for us too. First of all, we teamed up with the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN) with some joint materials and a best practice sharing website. ASPEN's Malnutrition Awareness Week is held a little earlier than ours, but that doesn't stop us sharing insights and supporting each other. This small joint working project hopefully sets the scene for further international collaboration, which will help us extend the reach of our messages.

We also introduced our national malnutrition screening survey to help us understand more about the prevalence of malnutrition in adults

and gain insights into the nutritional care they receive. We were thrilled with the response to this survey - people across a multitude of health and social care settings got involved by entering patient data on the portal and calculating 'MUST' scores. We are crunching the data now and will look forward to updating on it soon.

### On the subject of 'MUST'...

November is really quite a special month for us as it marks the 16th birthday of the 'MUST' tool!

The 'Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool' ('MUST') was launched by our standing committee, the Malnutrition Advisory Group, back in November 2003. Since its launch it has gained endorsements from many governmental and non-governmental organisations, including the British Dietetic Association (BDA), the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA). It is the most commonly used screening tool in the UK. It is also used in many other countries in Europe and the rest of the world.

We are delighted to see how 'MUST' has grown over the years but we still believe there is work to do to ensure it lives up to the 'universal' in its name. One of the areas we want to see it being used more is in care homes. We know that 35% of people admitted to care homes are at risk of malnutrition, how much of a difference could it make if screening on arrival was universal?

A little while ago we caught up with Professor Martin Green, CEO of Care England, who told us that he shares this ambition. He said: *"I think it's vital to raise the bar when it comes to screening for malnutrition in care homes. Nutrition and hydration are absolutely central to delivering a good quality of care and the 'MUST' tool is vitally important. Nothing else can be done if you don't have people's nutrition right, it's the absolute foundation of a good quality life."* It's really great that Martin is giving out this message. We do appreciate, as does he, the enormous pressure that care home teams are under right now, and nutrition and hydration screening no

doubt seems to be just another thing to do with limited resources, limited time and limited support. But Martin's point is correct, it's not an add-on, it's the building block for sustaining a good quality life. I sincerely hope that anybody reading this who is care home based, or has a connection with a care home, will help spread this message. It's true that we have a lot of work to do in all settings, there is still work to be done to routinely establish the use of 'MUST' on hospital admissions and in primary care, but if we can make headway in social care, that will be tremendous.

If you want to watch the film we made with Martin, or share it, please find it on the BAPEN website: [www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/combatting-malnutrition/malnutrition-awareness-week](http://www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/combatting-malnutrition/malnutrition-awareness-week)

### **Self-screening and signposting**

Speaking of films to watch and share.... We also caught up with colleagues from across the country in the run up to UK Malnutrition Awareness Week to help draw attention to some of the excellent self-screening and signposting tools that are available for non-clinical teams, the wider voluntary workforce, as well as individuals and families. Emma Connolly, from Age UK Salford, told us about the PaperWeight Armband, and Professor Jane Murphy from Bournemouth University, told us about the newly launched Nutrition Wheel, which is an interactive version of the Patients Association Nutrition Checklist. Check them out on the website: [www.ageuk.org.uk/salford/about-us/improving-nutrition-and-hydration/the-paperweight-armband](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/salford/about-us/improving-nutrition-and-hydration/the-paperweight-armband) and [www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/resources/self-screening-resources/nutrition-wheel](http://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/resources/self-screening-resources/nutrition-wheel). Please also have a look at and share our own online self-screening tool: [www.bapen.org.uk/screening-and-must/must/must-toolkit](http://www.bapen.org.uk/screening-and-must/must/must-toolkit). We affectionately refer to the self-screening tool as 'mini-MUST', as it is developed from that, and gives people a 'MUST' score, as well as supportive information. Our goal is for everyone who is vulnerable to monitor their weight with the online self-screening tool, regularly checking in so that they can spot a worrying weight loss sooner. It's exciting that our tool, the PaperWeight Armband, the Nutrition Checklist and the Nutrition Wheel are all publicly available now. Please help us spread the word

as much as possible to potentially vulnerable people and those who work with them. Social media is our friend here! Get posting and don't forget to tag us on Twitter @BAPENUK and on Facebook @UKBAPEN!

### **Making our voice heard**

We have been pleased over the last couple of years to increasingly ensure that our voice is heard in national debates about nutrition. There is much going on that affects patients (the TPN crisis and Brexit to name two substantial concerns) and we consider it within our remit to respond to these issues and to try to bring clarity. Please do keep an eye out on BAPEN's news and statements page on our website for any statements that we issue to be clear about our position on these matters, whether they be linked to the NHS, the social care system or the wider political environment.

### **Coming up soon!**

#### **ONCA Conference, 19-20th November**

Despite the undulating policy and political environment, BAPEN continues to monitor for relevant changes, constantly adapting and responding to the challenges that arise. We'll be using the Optimal Nutritional Care for All (ONCA) conference in Cambridge this November, not only to showcase best nutritional practice, but also as a platform to extend the reach of our call to action for further improvements to a different and wider audience.

#### **BAPEN Annual Conference**

This year, BAPEN's Annual Conference lands in Belfast on 26-27th November 2019. The conference programme features a range of fascinating symposia and excellent debates. I'll be taking to the stage to chat to some special guests for the opening session, 'Good Morning BAPEN, live from Belfast!'. Don't miss our Nutrition Village which will be set up with practical workstations demonstrating clinical procedures with troubleshooting tips from experts. Last year's conference was fantastic – but this one is set to be even more special. I'm looking forward to seeing you there!

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

Twitter: [@BAPENUK](#) Facebook: [@UKBAPEN \(British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition\)](#)