



## IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL CARE AND TREATMENT

### Perspectives and Recommendations *from* Population Groups, Patients and Carers

#### A Report from BAPEN with 18 collaborating partners from the voluntary sector

M Elia and R M Smith on behalf of BAPEN and its collaborators

**Collaborating organisations:** Age Concern England, Age Concern Croydon, Age Concern Hackney, CICRA (Crohns in Childhood Research), Coeliac UK, CORE (Digestive Disorders), Counsel and Care, Cystic Fibrosis Trust, *for dementia*/Admiral Nurses, Help the Aged, ILC-UK (International Longevity Centre UK), Macmillan Cancer Support, Mencap, NACC (National Association of Crohns and Colitis), Parkinson's Disease Society, PINNT/HalfPINNT (Patients on Intravenous and Nasogastric Nutrition Treatment), Scope.

**Admiral Nurses** supported by the charity *for dementia* said: "Carers and families see nutrition as an extremely high priority to maintaining health and social contact of the person with dementia. Unfortunately in the experience of Admiral Nurses distress around eating and drinking and malnutrition often goes unnoticed until there is a change in symptoms or carer circumstances. Admiral Nurses consider nutrition and hydration as part of our initial and follow-up assessment of the physical and emotional needs of the person with dementia and their carer. We endeavour to ensure that all health and care professionals we work with are alert to this fundamental issue."

**Counsel and Care** said: "This report from BAPEN brings this crucial issue to the attention of government, who must ensure that information and advice around nutrition is part and parcel of health and social care service provision for everyone. Our recent publication *A New Appetite for Life* set out the potential costs of ignoring nutrition to the NHS and social services. This new report from BAPEN and its recommendations is an important contribution to this debate."

**Cystic Fibrosis Trust (CFT)** commented: "The Cystic Fibrosis Trust welcomes the BAPEN nutrition report, drawing attention to the problems experienced by many people with a variety of health difficulties. In a recent survey conducted by the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, around 35% out of well over 1,000 respondents indicated that they had problems in putting on and maintaining weight. A further 50% reported severe problems with digestion, which sometimes resulted in a hospital admission. Whilst most of these patients said they regularly saw a specialist cystic fibrosis dietitian, there was a worrying number of patients who had not seen a dietitian at all, or had only seen one once in the last year. This is just one example of how poor attention to dietary and digestive considerations may have severe adverse impact on the health of an individual. The BAPEN report tackles the various issues faced by those with health problems and their nutritional requirements in a thoughtful and sensitive way. This basic aspect of healthcare does need to be given appropriate priority to ensure the maximum length and best quality of life."

**Help the Aged** said "We know that many older people living in the community are malnourished, and the condition is often exacerbated on admission to hospital and care homes. Stories of older people being left without help or support to eat are numerous and disturbing. We must do more to alert health professionals to the dangers of unrecognised malnutrition and this report is a step in the right direction. Nutrition is important not only for physical health but is also important for promoting the fundamental dignity of older people."

**Mencap** said: "We welcome BAPEN's report and the problems it illustrates match the experience of too many people with a learning disability in hospitals and care homes. The devastating effect of lack of proper feeding support for people with a learning disability in hospitals was outlined in *Death by indifference*. Every individual hospital and care home must act to ensure they supply good quality food and that vulnerable people at risk of malnutrition are supported in getting the food and nutrition they need."

**The Parkinson's Disease Society (PDS)** welcomes the release of the BAPEN report recommending improvements in the nutritional care and treatment for all. Daiga Heisters, National Education Advisor for the PDS said: "Parkinson's disease patients can be slow at eating and may require extra time to enjoy independent eating or need support at every mealtime. The recommendations in this report make it clear how important it is to include nutritional information, care and support in every health and social care plan across all settings. This is a positive step in helping decrease the risk of malnutrition."

**PINNT (Patients on Intravenous, Nutrition and Naso-gastric Treatment)** and a patient herself said: "The groups represented at the 'Round Table' discovered and agreed that *the same type of problems* with nutritional care and treatment affected us all. This came as a surprise – we all thought we had unique problems around equal access to information, expertise and continuity of care.

It also came home to us that it is not just the child or adult with nutritional issues who is affected but also their family – parents, children, siblings, and grandparents. Health and care professionals need to take this wider group into account."

**The Royal College of Nursing (RCN)** today backed calls to improve nutritional care in all settings. The renewed call echoes the recommendations of a new Report from BAPEN. Responding to the Report recommendations, Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) said:

“The delivery of quality nutritional care is a fundamental of good healthcare. We call for children and adults in all settings to be screened and monitored for malnutrition as recommended in the Report. In order to achieve this, it is crucial that all the appropriate screening tools, equipment and training is provided for all health and social care workers.

The RCN is committed to improving nutritional care and is currently running the *Nutrition Now!* Campaign to help nurses and other healthcare workers to provide their patients with good nutritional care. A range of resources including information leaflets and a CD to facilitate educational workshops are available.”

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