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In response to the launch of the charity BAPEN's Nutrition Screening Week Report 2010 (www.bapen.org.uk) and its drive to ensure nutritional care is provided across all setting for all vulnerable groups the following organisations issued supporting statements:

- National Association of Care Catering (NACC)
- The Patients Association
- Age UK

BAPEN thanks these organisations for their support.

Derek Johnson, Chair of NACC says "The latest BAPEN figures reinforce the need for the NACC campaign 'No One Should Go Hungry' ¹ which seeks to highlight the potential increase of malnutrition in the care sector if food services are withdrawn or restricted.

It is vital that community meal services are in place to effectively support people living at home, allowing them access to good nutrition. The NACC identifies those working in the care catering sector as being in an ideal position to monitor the health of older people and encourage them to eat well, lowering their risk of malnutrition. Regular delivery of meals to the home is key to ensuring older people have regular contact with others.

A reduction in community meals provision by local authorities will not only lead to a greater number of vulnerable people suffering from malnutrition, as potentially their access to nutritionally balanced food is reduced, but will also mean social interaction, and its vital role in uncovering those at risk, is ignored. This could lead to more admissions into hospital and care which will cost the government even more money to fund."

Katherine Murphy, Chief Executive, Patients Association says:

"The BAPEN Report on malnutrition rates on admission to hospitals and care homes makes sobering reading. From calls to our Helpline, we already know that too many patients become malnourished when in hospital - either because they are not given help with eating or they are not given access to much needed meal supplements. However, it is shocking that this latest report from BAPEN shows that much malnutrition occurs in the community, and that more patients than ever are entering hospital in a malnourished state. Poor nutrition lengthens hospital stays and puts patient recovery at serious risk. With the Health and Social Care Bill pushing forward greater links between health and social care, ALL care providers have a responsibility to ensure patients, particularly elderly patients who live alone, are not neglected in the community and have their individual nutrition needs met."²

Michelle Mitchell, Charity Director at Age UK, said:

"Preparing meals can become difficult for some older people, particularly those living with illness and disability. We know that up to 1 million older people living in the community are malnourished.

¹ <http://www.thenacc.co.uk/news/campaign>

² The Patients Association responds to the Ombudsman's Report on poor care in hospital
<http://www.patients-association.com/News/415>

“Lunch clubs and ‘meals on wheels’ services help ensure many vulnerable people get a hot nutritious meal, helping them to stay healthy and live at home independently for longer. Lunch clubs also provide an opportunity to get out and socialise, preventing isolation and loneliness as well as giving carers much needed respite.

“Age UK is warning that cutting these relatively low cost services today could store up problems in the future, with deteriorating health leading to, increased hospital admissions and demand for care home places as people become unable to cope at home independently.”

- *Age UK provides over 50 lunch clubs and meals on wheels services across the country.*

ENDS/

Contact details and Note follow

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BAPEN, the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, is the multi-professional registered charity, committed to combating malnutrition & to improving nutritional care and treatment in hospital, care & community.
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