

Tackling Malnutrition and the NHS Ten Year Plan

Malnutrition Awareness Week

November is an exciting month for all those interested in nutritional care and committed to tackling malnutrition in the UK. BAPEN is holding its Annual Conference in Wales, and the BSNA team will be there with our stand and attending some of the insightful and educational sessions. It's also Malnutrition Awareness Week 2025 (11-17 November) and the Malnutrition Task Force and BAPEN will be running a variety of themed days to help raise awareness and understanding of the risks of preventable malnutrition across health and social care.

To mark Malnutrition Awareness Week, BSNA is delighted to be hosting a parliamentary drop-in session on 19 November to talk to MPs and Peers about the need for high quality nutritional support in the community for those at risk of malnutrition.



Currently, malnutrition impacts over 3 million people in the UK and costs the healthcare system £22.6 billion. It is predicted that this cost will increase by £4 billion by 2035. As the Government looks to deliver its NHS 10 Year Plan and the three shifts the plan aims to achieve – sickness to prevention, hospital to community and analogue to digital – understanding the risk and burden of malnutrition will be crucial to improving health outcomes, reducing inequality and shifting care into the community.

Parliamentarians will be invited to hear about the need for high quality nutritional support in the community for individuals at risk of

malnutrition – notably those with long-term conditions or over the age of 65. Colleagues from BAPEN, BDA and PINNT will also be joining the event to share their expertise and insight with parliamentarians and emphasise the need for greater focus at a national and local level on tackling malnutrition.

Supporting a new blueprint for the effective treatment of malnutrition worldwide

While it is important to champion measures to support more people at risk of malnutrition in the community and thereby reduce hospital admissions, there is still a need to ensure the best standards of nutritional care across hospital and other healthcare settings.

As a member of ISDI (International Special Dietary Foods Industries), BSNA is supporting work on a new ISO standard for Malnutrition Prevention, Detection and Treatment, which will serve as a blueprint for the effective treatment of malnutrition in healthcare facilities worldwide.

An ISO standard is an internationally recognised document, created by the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO), that provides a consistent set of guidelines and specifications for products, processes, or services to ensure quality, safety and efficiency.

Earlier this year, this new work received overwhelming support from the members of the ISO Technical Committee 34 'Food products' (TC34) and will be the first ever international standard in the area of malnutrition care.

Malnutrition in hospitals is a critical and global clinical issue that affects up to 50% of in-patients around the world.¹ Some countries have taken varied and partial approaches to malnutrition care, but it is often overlooked as a clinical issue. ISDI Vice-President, Xavier Lavigne, who is also the Convenor of a new Malnutrition Working Group within TC34, said: *"Malnutrition care in hospitals is too often inadequate with considerable cost to both patients and healthcare systems. This international standard to address malnutrition across the continuum of patient care offers an opportunity to harmonise practices globally and embed malnutrition treatment as a routine part of healthcare delivery."*

The new standard, started in October, is expected to be completed within three years, after which the committee members will vote on the adoption of the standard. National mirror committees will be set up in more than 15 countries to support the work.

References: 1. Roberts S, et al. (2024). Prospective validation of the Global Leadership Initiative on Malnutrition criteria for identifying malnutrition in hospitals: A protocol and feasibility pilot study. *Nutr Clin Pract.*; 39(6): 1406-1418.

About the British Specialist Nutrition Association

BSNA is the trade association representing the manufacturers of products designed to meet the particular nutritional needs of individuals; these include specialist products for infants and young children (including infant formula, follow-on formula, young child formula and complementary weaning foods), medical nutrition products for diseases, disorders and medical conditions, including oral nutritional supplements, enteral tube feeding and parenteral nutrition, as well as companies who aseptically compound chemotherapy, parenteral nutrition and CIVAS.