

The power of collaboration

What will it take to get nutrition front and centre in healthcare?

With the publication of the 10 Year Health Plan last year and more recently the National Cancer Plan for England, prevention and early intervention are at the heart of the Government's vision for healthcare.

Yet there is little direct mention of the role of nutritional care in supporting better patient outcomes, despite the well-established evidence across a whole host of diseases and conditions as to the benefits where nutrition is included in the clinical pathway. With the first week of June 2026 seeing both Dietitians' Week (1-5 June), recognising the impact of dietitians in healthcare and community settings, and the Optimal Nutritional Care for All (ONCA) conference (Paris, France), colleagues across the nutritional care world take time to reflect on what it will take to get nutrition front and centre in healthcare.

ONCA is coordinated by the European Nutrition for Health Alliance (EHNA) – an alliance of European nutrition organisations including the European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) and the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) and patient-led groups.

BSNA continues to support the work of EHNA, and we were delighted to be involved in the ONCA conference held in the UK in 2019, alongside UK colleagues in BAPEN, PINNT, BDA, and more.

Through ONCA, partner organisations seek to campaign for EU member states to implement nutritional screening and improve nutritional care: *"21 European countries joining in one striking campaign."*

The discussions at ONCA, while focused on the EU member states, are a valuable opportunity to discuss how stakeholders across nutrition – from industry to professional bodies to patient groups – can come together to make malnutrition visible across Europe.



Dietitians' Week 2026 is one way for those of us in the UK, to promote the crucial role of dietitians in addressing malnutrition through early intervention and effective nutritional care in clinical pathways – using of appropriate evidence-based malnutrition management.

BSNA is delighted to support Dietitians' Week and advocate in support of dietitians' role and value in meeting the challenge of malnutrition in the UK.

Development of an ISO standard on malnutrition

BSNA is also working with colleagues across the globe to support a new blueprint for the effective treatment of malnutrition worldwide.

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, is being developed with UK colleagues from the BDA and BAPEN also contributing to the drafting process.

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.

Work on the new standard, which is based on a Standards Council of Canada standard, began in October 2025 and is expected to be completed within three years. At that point, the committee members will vote on the adoption of the standard. National mirror committees have been set up in more than 15 countries to support the work, including in the UK, and BSNA has contributed to initial draft texts for the standard. This is a great opportunity for colleagues across the different nations to not only set a clear set of standards for care of people who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition, but also to make the case for effectively managing malnutrition risk.

By raising awareness of the impact malnutrition has on health outcomes and the value of taking action to health systems, we hope the development of the ISO standard will also support advocacy in the UK to see that nutritional care is included in all clinical pathways and we look forward to working with UK colleagues to raise these messages up the political agenda.

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.