

Older People's Essential Nutrition (OPEN) Toolkit

Introduction

Malnutrition is a huge public health problem, which currently affects more than 3 million people in the UK¹. As the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to rise by almost 50% in the next 20 years², it's a problem that cannot be ignored. Studies showing that whilst 1 in 10 people over 65 living in the community are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition³, 33% of hospital admissions and 37% of those who have recently moved to a care home are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition⁴.

Providing best practice nutrition and hydration care involves five key principles, which incorporate NICE's Nutrition support in adults quality standard (QS24) and clinical guidance (CG32)⁵. These are 1) raising awareness to prevent and treat malnutrition, 2) working together within and across organisations, 3) identifying malnutrition risk early using screening tools, 4) developing individualized care plans, and 5) monitoring and evaluating the impact of care on an individual's outcome.

Older People's Essential Nutrition (OPEN) is a project funded by the Wessex Academic Health Science Network (AHSN), with support from a range of stakeholders in the health, social care and voluntary sectors. The overall aim of this innovative project is to develop and evaluate an approach for the provision of good nutritional care for older people; by providing malnutrition awareness training and follow up support to a range of sectors to provide a collaborative and joined-up approach to tackling malnutrition in older people.

The Wessex AHSN has put together a toolkit as part of the project, with the aim of sharing the resources developed during the project with other organisations that may be planning similar training or initiatives. By using this toolkit in your area, you will be working towards best practice in malnutrition screening and providing good nutritional care across all care settings, as outlined in the key national guidance and standards which have been published over the last eight years⁶. A multi-disciplinary approach has supported the development of the toolkit, and the toolkit was endorsed by the British Dietetic Association (BDA) in 2016.

This document has been designed as an overarching document for the whole toolkit, which has been uploaded online in different sections. The toolkit itself has been split into five main sections:

1. Training packages for health, social care and voluntary sectors – a separate guidance document has been produced with information about how to use these
2. Awareness materials; resources suitable for the general public
3. Generic malnutrition care pathways, which can be adopted for your locality; localisation of the care pathways is required to ensure local flavour and adoption
4. Evaluation framework
5. Training videos

¹ British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) toolkit for commissioners and providers: 'Malnutrition Matters – Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care' (2012)

² Office for National Statistics (2012); Age UK (2016)

³ ENHA, BAPEN, ILC-UK – 'Malnutrition among older people in the community: policy Recommendations for Change' (2006)

⁴ BAPEN Nutritional Screening Weeks (2007-2011)

⁵ Malnutrition Task Force: "Malnutrition in later life: Prevention and Early Intervention" (2013)

⁶ NICE Guidance on Nutrition Support (2006), CQC Outcome Standards; outcome 5 (2010), NICE Quality Standards for Nutrition (2012), BAPEN toolkit for commissioners and providers: 'Malnutrition Matters – Meeting Quality Standards in Nutritional Care' (2012), BAPEN 'Malnutrition Matters – a commitment to act' (2014)

Training Packages

The Wessex AHSN have put together a range of training packages for use in health care (GP practices, pharmacies, occupational therapist and community nursing teams), social care and the voluntary sector. These consist of session plans, presentations, trainer information, trainee resources and activities, knowledge and session evaluations and follow up resources.

These training materials have been developed in conjunction with a range of professionals across the Wessex region. We would like to acknowledge and thank the following people and departments for their input on the development of the training packages:

- Emma Parsons, Lead Dietitian, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN; Research Fellow, Southampton Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), University of Southampton
- Annemarie Aburrow, Dietitian, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN
- Sue Green, Associate Professor, Health Sciences, University of Southampton
- Jane Murphy, Clinical Lead, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN (from Jan 2016); Associate Professor, Health and Social Sciences, Bournemouth University
- Kathy Wallis, Senior Programme Manager, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN
- Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Community Dietitians)
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Dietetics Department)
- Health Education Wessex (Public Health Practitioner Development)
- NHS Frimley Health Foundation Trust (Dietetics Department)
- Portsmouth Hospitals (Dietetics Department)
- Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (Dietetics Department)

Awareness materials

The Wessex AHSN has developed some resources on malnutrition awareness. These are suitable to be used with both patients (alongside verbal advice) and the general public. The leaflet “Eating well, feeling good: Guidance if you are losing weight or underweight” (also available in a double-sided easy-print version) and a suite for three visual posters (signs of malnutrition, signs of weight loss, tips for eating more) provide awareness on malnutrition, simple dietary advice, and information on where to go for help. An additional two leaflets are available for people living with dementia and COPD.

Generic Malnutrition Care Pathways

Once a person has been screened for malnutrition, it’s essential to initiate an appropriate nutritional care pathway to ensure the person receives the appropriate advice, information and treatment to improve their overall nutrition and malnutrition risk. This includes the individualisation of nutritional care plans, communication of the care plans between relevant workforces, and ongoing review and care of each individual that covers the health, social care and voluntary sector workforces.

The care pathways developed for use with the OPEN project have now been adapted to make three generic care pathways. This means that you can use and adopt these pathways in your own localities, simply by making a few additions to make them local to you.

These care pathways were adapted from the pathways developed by the “Dorset Nutritional Care Partnership For Adults”. The Wessex AHSN would like to thank Sue Hawkins and her team for their kind input into the development and review of these pathways.

Evaluation Toolkit

An evaluation toolkit has been developed to help you consider how to go about doing a robust evaluation of an intervention to address aspects of malnutrition and also to help you build and create your own bespoke evaluation. This will ensure that initiatives around malnutrition can provide evidence based data to provide guidance on the appropriate continuation of the initiative.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their input on the development of the evaluation framework:

- Jenny Davies, Clinical Lead, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN (until Oct 2015); Senior Specialist in Public Health, Southampton City Council;
- Sue Green, Associate Professor, Health Sciences, University of Southampton
- Rhiannon Jones, Dietitian, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN (until Jan 2016)
- Annemarie Aburrow, Dietitian, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN (from Jan 2016)
- Jacqueline Landman, Senior Teaching Fellow, HDH, Faculty of Medicine, University of Southampton
- Catherine McShane, Project Manager, NHS Healthcall Undernutrition, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- Jane Murphy, Clinical Lead, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN (from Jan 2016); Associate Professor, Health and Social Sciences, Bournemouth University
- Emma Parsons, Lead Dietitian, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN; Research Fellow, Southampton Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), University of Southampton
- Caroline Powell, Director for the Centre of Implementation Science, Wessex AHSN
- Michelle Smith, Health Programme Advisor, Public Health Dorset
- Mike Stroud, Consultant Gastroenterologist, University Hospital Southampton; Past President BAPEN
- Kathy Wallis, Senior Programme Manager, Nutrition Programme, Wessex AHSN

Training videos

Two training videos were published in 2018. The first video, entitled 'OPEN undernutrition awareness training video' provides general information on undernutrition and is available as one whole film (38 minutes) and as eight individual episodes (ranging in length from 2-8 minutes). The second video, entitled 'How to screen for undernutrition using 'MUST' video' provides more specific information on nutritional screening using 'MUST'. Both videos are suitable for viewing either alone or in a group training setting. We have also produced a quiz to be completed after watching the videos, to help consolidate knowledge learned.

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Further reading

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