

# Dorset takes Action to Combat Malnutrition in the Community



Sue Hawkins, Care Catering Services Manager, Tricuro

For a number of years Dorset has been at the forefront of reducing malnutrition. In 2013, Dorset County Council partnered with many third sector organisations, Public Health Dorset and, what was then, the Primary Care Trust to produce a Nutritional Care Strategy for Adults.<sup>1</sup>

The aims of the strategy were to:

- Increase public awareness of the value to their health and wellbeing of good nutrition
- Alert people to the dangers of malnutrition and dehydration and highlight the tell-tale signs
- Make the public aware of the services available to help them
- Improve the nutritional care and health and wellbeing of adults within Dorset
- Reduce the related costs of malnutrition through preventative measures
- Produce, implement and maintain a joint action plan.

This strategy was launched on the 13th of May 2013 at our Appetite For Change conference,<sup>2</sup> chaired by Debbie Ward, Chief Executive of Dorset County Council and Dr David Phillips, Director of Public Health Dorset. Since then we have all been very busy working to meet the aims of strategy.

## Raising awareness

This following raising awareness work is now supported by the Care Act which was introduced in April 2015 and focuses on the wellbeing of all adults, meeting their individual needs and developing early intervention services.

### Build Yourself Up

The first piece of work we undertook was to agree and develop the recommended actions that we would recommend to someone if they had recently had significant unplanned weight loss. The 'Build Yourself Up'<sup>3</sup> document covers not only information about malnutrition and dehydration, but simple menu ideas (e.g. baked beans on toast with grated cheese is a good meal), shopping, information on how to assist someone to eat and also suggestions for what should be stored in the store cupboards and fridges.

We found that most older people don't do their own shopping so not only did we need to inform them but we also needed to use the information to inform children, grandchildren, neighbours and the local shop keepers!

### Presentation

We clearly didn't have the time to travel the countryside talking to people. So instead we developed a 10 minute presentation 'Losing Weight Isn't Always Great.'<sup>4</sup> We presented this to the health and social care teams and our Partnership for Older People Programme Board on the proviso that they cascaded to organisations where ever they went. The presentation has now been shown to hundreds of people across the county and is available for anyone to download and use.<sup>4</sup>

### Safe and independent living

A partnership, including the Dorset Partnership for Older People Programme (POPP) ([www.dorsetforyou.com/popp](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/popp)), have developed a Safe and Independent Living Form. The aim of the form is to provide a multi-agency referral approach to enabling access to signposting, support, and services, which will be particularly beneficial to those who are aged 50+ or experiencing vulnerability. The form includes the question: "Have you recently experienced any unexplained or unplanned weight loss?"<sup>5</sup>

## My Life My Care

Our website [www.mylifemycare.com/Finding-help](http://www.mylifemycare.com/Finding-help) provides a range of information and advice to support adults with their care needs. It includes help for people to eat well, whether this is due to loss of appetite, preparing meals or simply if they are unable to shop. Perhaps someone has lost weight without understanding why. There are a range of solutions to meet the needs of individuals and advice for people on how to get help and support if they are not eating properly or have recently lost weight without trying to.

## Nutritional screening

We wanted though to do far more than raising awareness, we wanted to start proactively reducing levels of malnutrition in the community through nutritional screening. It sounds simple but we were soon to find out that it isn't, and that no where else in the country were health and social care teams joint working on such a project. Yet, this is the generation of joined-up health and social care and early intervention programmes so surely it must tick all the right boxes!

So what did we do? Firstly, we found enthusiastic people – the most essential ingredient! They were mainly based in Purbeck. So I went along and met with GPs and locality based health and social care staff to think of a way forward – this led to our first pilot!

## 1st Pilot – commonly called the Wool Pilot!

We needed to prove that it was possible for health and social care staff in the community to nutritional screen and provide the appropriate advice. The plan was that we (health and social care staff) would routinely nutritionally screen (using the 'Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool' ['MUST']<sup>6</sup>) every patient of the Wool GP practice that they visited at home. To achieve this we needed to develop care pathways and supporting forms for each of the 'MUST' scores and develop the appropriate actions, dependant on whether or not people were likely to be revisited.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to this pilot, I trained nearly 100 staff on 'MUST', the care pathways, including the appropriate actions to take and the completion of the forms. The pilot began in November 2013, it was anticipated it would last for approximately six months but would continue after that point if it were successful. Luckily, it was successful.

Public Health Dorset were responsible for the evaluation and the main results were:

- Staff were supportive of the pilot and thought it was part of their role to nutritionally screen
- The few weighing scales that we purchased were not stable enough for frail adults
- The leaving of copies of the paperwork at the service user's house hadn't worked so information wasn't forwarded to others who may be visiting

- The scanning of forms to be forwarded to the office in order that the data could be input into a spreadsheet was time consuming
- The link between the community and the GP practice needed improving.

### Wool Pilot review/lessons learnt

**Scales:** We sourced and trialed different ones – simple!

**Electronic forms:** We met with the Dorset County Council IT team who were brilliant and we developed an electronic form (see **Figure 1**). The basic principles of the electronic form are:

- The electronic forms and live data base can be accessed by both health and social care staff
- There are two electronic forms – one for the GP Community Matron Care Pathway and one for the Community Care Pathway
- They clearly lay out all the appropriate actions to take
- We can run reports off the data base as and when required
- If someone has a 'MUST' score of 4 an automatic email is sent to the senior locality managers for them to under take a detailed case review

- If someone is already under a dietitian automatic emails are sent to the dietitian either for information or for action
- If the community matron needs to be involved they are automatically emailed
- If any of the input data is missed or calculated incorrectly then the form informs you!

**The Community/GP link:** We met with the locality GP lead and agreed that the community matrons would pick up the linking role between the GP practice. The Community and the Care Pathways were amended accordingly.

## 2nd Pilot – commonly called the Purbeck Locality Pilot!

So we were ready to start again and we had agreement from all the partners to run the Purbeck Pilot. This involved six GP practices and had the aim of improving health and wellbeing of adults by reducing their risk of malnutrition.

At this point we applied and were successful in becoming one of the five Malnutrition Task Force (MTF) pilot areas.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 1: Dorset County Council Electronic Forms

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the 'dorsetforyou.com' website. The page is titled 'Service User: Tom Tester' and 'NHS Number: 1111111111'. The form contains several sections with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No' answers, and text input fields for 'Comments'. The 'Total MUST Score' is set to 'Please select an option'. The 'Completed by' field is filled with 'sue.e.hawkins'. The form also includes a 'Notes' section at the bottom with instructions on how to calculate BMI and use ulna measurements.

Being an MTF pilot area meant that one of our local Third Sector partners 'Help and Care' received some financial support to raise awareness and they held events across the Purbeck area.

Also at this time, the Wessex Area Health Science Network started their 'Nutrition Programme' to develop good practice across the region. They kindly agreed to a small amount of funding to help with the cost of training materials, weighing scales and some of the IT requirements.

The pilot began during November 2014 and, yet again, I was out training; another 100 staff were trained and our audience increased. We were now also including: learning disability teams, mental health teams, Dorset County Council Day Services and Respite Care and the two local community hospital discharge teams.

### Results to date

As of 30th of April 2015 we have nutritionally screened 205 service users. It was a slow start over Christmas but we are now adding more month-on-month. Of those screened, 62 service users had a 'MUST' score of 1 or more. See **Figure 2**.

#### The maths!

If you use the national figures that a person at risk of malnutrition can generate costs of £1,449 per person, and if you make the assumption that we will reduce peoples' risk of malnutrition in a large percentage of the people that we found to be at risk, then it is possible that we could have made savings in the region of:

- 62 service users x £1,449 = £89,838/5 months x 12 months = £215,611 per annum.

Investment to date has been time, enthusiasm and approximately £15,000.

#### The outcomes!

A service user had a 'MUST' score of 4 on New Years Eve. They would not have been screened had it not been for this pilot. They received intensive support

from our re-enablement team and by the 26th of March they had increased their weight by 3 kg, nearly 12% or their body weight.

The Locality Manager says: *"This was an excellent outcome for Mrs X, whose condition means she is particularly vulnerable. This was achieved through effective joint working, which Mrs X really appreciated."*

On January the 9th, another patient was screened and a 'MUST' score of 4 was highlighted. The patient weighed 51 kg, and suffered from dementia and neglect. A Risk Management Protocol meeting was held a couple of days later with all the health and social care partners present. He was admitted to hospital; he remained there for approximately four weeks and has since been admitted into care. His social worker says he is now far more settled, less anxious and weighs 63.2 kg, that's over a 20% increase!

### Next steps

So what happens now? At this stage we are optimistic for the future and so are already planning the next steps. It has been agreed between the Clinical Commissioning Group, Dorset County Council and Public Health Dorset that we will:

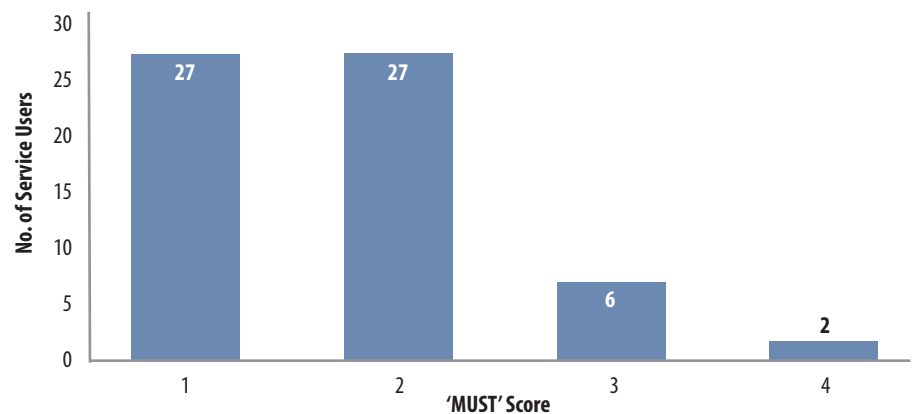
- Look to expand into the next area – Christchurch
- Develop the database to be large enough to cover the whole of Dorset and beyond
- Amend the forms with everything we have learnt to date
- With BAPEN's agreement, amend the electronic forms to include the 'MUST' calculator.

It all sounds quite simple when written in this order, but it has been quite a roller coaster and my advice to anyone who is about to undertake such a journey is:

- It costs very little, the savings could be huge and the benefits to services users even greater
- Find enthusiastic people to support you
- Just do it – don't think too much!

References: 1. Dorset County Council, et al. (2013). Nutritional Care Strategy for Adults. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/nutritional-care-strategy](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/nutritional-care-strategy) (May 2015). 2. Jackie Allen, et al. (2013). Nutritional Care Strategy For Adults Launch (presentation) An Appetite for Change Conference. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/article/410121/An-Appetite-for-Change-Conference](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/410121/An-Appetite-for-Change-Conference) (May 2015). 3. Dorset's Nutritional Care Strategy for Adults (2013). Build Yourself Up - Information on how to reduce the risks of malnutrition and dehydration. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/media/153603/Build-Yourself-Up---October-2013/pdf/Build\\_Yourself\\_Up\\_-\\_October\\_2013.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/153603/Build-Yourself-Up---October-2013/pdf/Build_Yourself_Up_-_October_2013.pdf) (May 2015). 4. Dorset's Nutritional Care Strategy for Adults (). Losing Weight is not Always Great – Losing Weight is not Always Great. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/media/194302/Losing-Weight-is-not-Always-Great/ppt/Losing\\_Weight\\_is\\_not\\_Always\\_Great\\_V6.pptx](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/194302/Losing-Weight-is-not-Always-Great/ppt/Losing_Weight_is_not_Always_Great_V6.pptx) (May 2015). 5. Dorset Partnership for Older People Programme (2013). Safe and Independent Living From. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/media/196137/SAIL-application-form/pdf/SAIL\\_form\\_v22.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/196137/SAIL-application-form/pdf/SAIL_form_v22.pdf) (May 2015). 6. BAPEN (2015). Introducing 'MUST'. Available online: [www.bapen.org.uk/screening-for-malnutrition/must/introducing-must](http://www.bapen.org.uk/screening-for-malnutrition/must/introducing-must) (May 2015). 7. Nutritional Care Strategy for Adults (2014). Purbeck Locality - Home and Community and GP Practice Pathways of Care Pilot. Available online: [www.dorsetforyou.com/media/197054/Home-and-Community-and-GP-Care-Pathways-in-the-Purbeck-locality/pdf/Home\\_and\\_Community\\_and\\_GP\\_Care\\_Pathways\\_in\\_the\\_Purbeck\\_locality\\_4\\_Nov\\_2014.doc](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/197054/Home-and-Community-and-GP-Care-Pathways-in-the-Purbeck-locality/pdf/Home_and_Community_and_GP_Care_Pathways_in_the_Purbeck_locality_4_Nov_2014.doc) (May 2015). 8. Malnutrition Task Force (2015) About. Available online: [www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/](http://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/) (2015).

Figure 2: Total 'MUST' Scores



For more information please contact Sue Hawkins, Care Catering Services Manager, Tricuro.