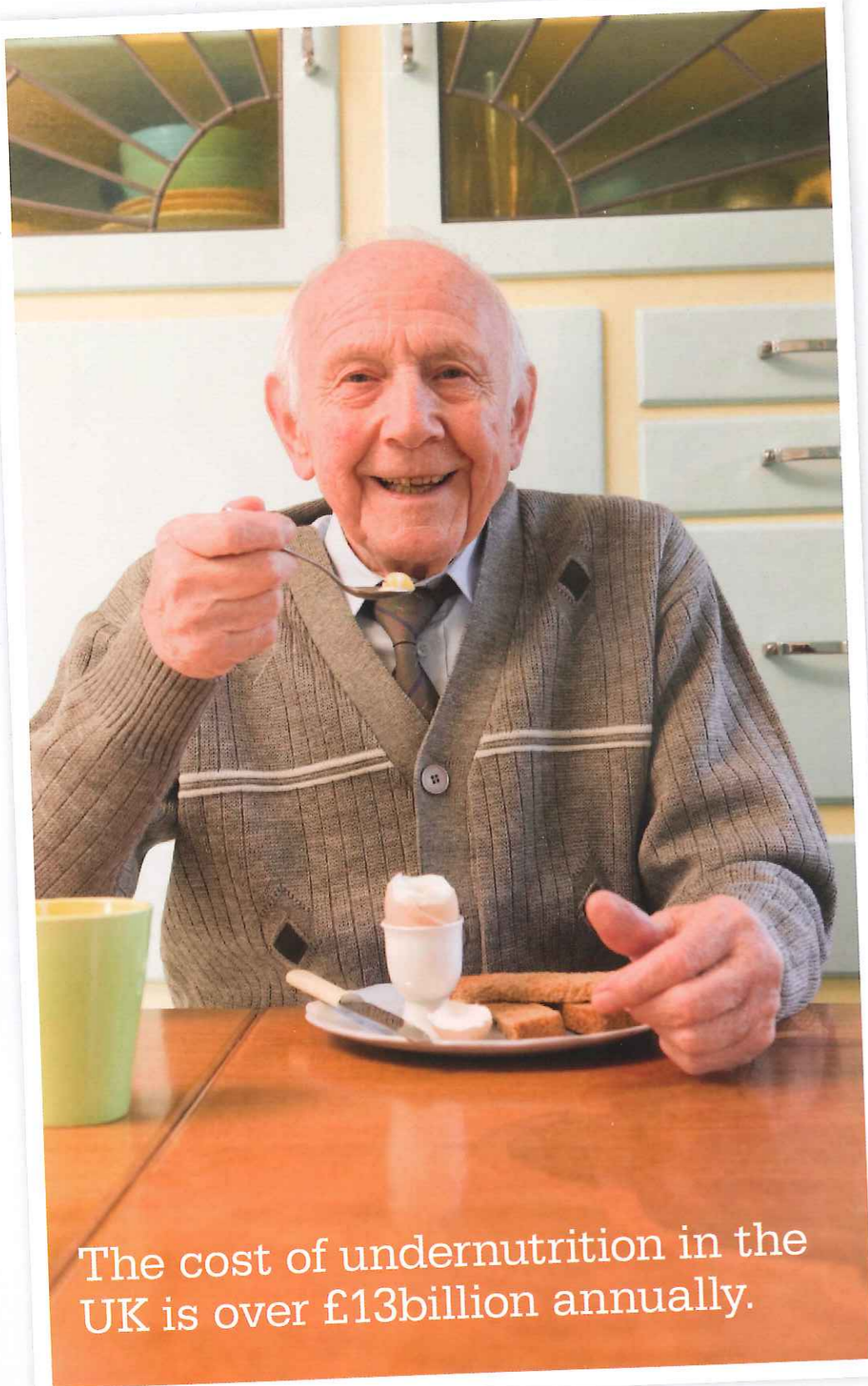


Focusing on Undernutrition



The cost of undernutrition in the UK is over £13billion annually.

>> An innovative new interactive website and two e-learning packages have been unveiled to help identify and treat undernutrition in care homes and the wider community. Created by dietitians Catherine McShane, Laura Gardner and Rachael Masters, on behalf of County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust, they aim to provide a more flexible approach to staff training. Rachael Masters explains...



Catherine McShane



Laura Gardner



Rachael Masters

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Recognising the issues of undernutrition

Undernutrition is a major public health issue with more than three million adults being at risk of undernutrition in the UK, 93% of which live in the community.

The cost of undernutrition in the UK is over £13billion annually.

However, undernutrition remains unidentified and untreated, increasing a person's vulnerability to illness, clinical complications and even death; resulting in increased use of healthcare services, including admissions to hospital and GP visits.

We know that identifying and treating undernutrition can decrease associated clinical complications by as much as 70% and reduce mortality by around 40%.

Providing good nutrition and hydration is a matter of quality.

The first simple, quick and cost-effective step to identify undernutrition is through nutritional screening such as 'MUST' (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool), the outcome of which must be linked to appropriate care plans. NICE identify that screening for undernutrition is carried out by health and social care staff with appropriate skills and training.

Managing undernutrition in the community

To address the issue of undernutrition in County Durham and Darlington, a unique award-winning service called Focus on Undernutrition (FoU) has been commissioned to deliver training on identifying and treating undernutrition in all areas of adult health and social care.

The aim of FoU is to ensure the timely detection and treatment of undernutrition using a food first approach and the appropriate prescribing of oral nutritional supplements.

Now Focus on Undernutrition's new e-learning programmes are available for use nationally:

- Identifying and treating undernutrition in care homes
- Identifying and treating undernutrition in the community

The e-learning has been endorsed by BAPEN (British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition), National Nutrition Nurses Group (NNG) and Teesside University.

The e-learning has been developed as an alternative, more flexible approach to provide training for staff working in the community and care homes. Benefits of completing the FoU e-learning:

- flexible way for an individual or an organisation to tackle undernutrition
- detailed training on the 'MUST' nutritional screening tool
- incorporates simple processes to identify and treat undernutrition
- promotes food first as treatment of undernutrition
- clear pathways for appropriate prescribing and monitoring of oral nutritional supplements

- contributes to continual professional development
- e-learning system is SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) compliant to work along staff electronic records
- management reports can be provided to organisations on individual learners

There are a variety of learning methods included video learning, drag and drop activities, click to reveal, completing 'MUST' interactively, multi-choice questions, typed responses and reflective practice.

Taking approximately 2-3 hours to complete, the learner can access training at a convenient time and work at their own pace. The package also incorporates assessment which includes two case studies, care planning using 'MUST' and 10 multi-choice questions. A pass mark of at least 60 per cent is required in order to pass the training, a certificate is automatically generated for the learner to print for their portfolio and evidence for CPD.

Information sheets and resources are downloadable throughout both of the e-learning programmes, including 'MUST', nourishing snack, nourishing drinks, fortified drinks leaflets, ulna height conversion charts, care pathways. These can then be implemented into the workplace.

The cost of the e-learning ranges from £15.00 to £8.00, dependant on the number of people completing it. Training packages are also available which include the training and the resources to implement the training immediately into your work setting.



>> For further details on the training package visit www.focusonundernutrition.co.uk

To watch a podcast on the e-learning, or for further information on Focus on Undernutrition's training and resources visit: www.focusonundernutrition.co.uk or email info@focusonundernutrition.co.uk

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

