

An integrated approach to addressing malnutrition in all settings - Derbyshire County Council

A community wide Nutrition Steering Group was established with representatives from Derbyshire County Council Adult Care Services, Burton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Chesterfield Royal NHS Foundation Trust, Derby Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Derbyshire Community Health NHS Trust and Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The remit of the Group is to implement recommendations from a scrutiny review and report. The review was initiated after concern was raised about older people being admitted to care homes from both hospitals and the community who were malnourished.

The Project

Four key areas were identified as being integral to addressing the issues:

- Communication: Sharing of patient information between different care settings with a view to developing a nutrition pathway for patients, and health promotion and awareness raising.
- Screening of older people: All services advised to adopt the use of the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) across all settings. Improved screening at a primary care level. Creating an early warning system for malnutrition.
- Training and development: All health and social care staff involved in the screening and assessment should have access to and undertake appropriate training. Nutrition champions within health and social care settings.
- Data and Information: Establishment of a Derbyshire baseline on prevalence of malnutrition to assist planning and commissioning activity. Better reporting of data and information that relates to nutrition of older people.

So far, the working party has prioritised and implemented two of the recommendations:

- Health promotion and awareness raising through articles and case studies in free papers delivered to every home in Derbyshire, and the Gold magazine focused on older citizens. Published nutritional information on the Derbyshire County Council Website and promotional materials for libraries and other community resources; produced a booklet and leaflet: 'How to Eat well - a guide for people who are underweight'. Attended Derbyshire Food and Drink Festival with a promotional stand and given talks to interested groups e.g. 50+ Forums
- Established a Derbyshire baseline on prevalence of malnutrition to improve information in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Derbyshire by screening 2,632 people aged 65 and over using the BAPEN Nutrition Screening Week survey tool. The survey took place across two Acute Trusts, 13 Community Hospitals (20 wards), and 71 Care and Nursing Homes (48 Private, 23 Council), as well as all inpatient mental health sites. The results showed 14 per cent of people were considered High Risk and 12 per cent Medium Risk.

The Benefits

The project has raised awareness with families, carers and staff and older people now have better information to make informed choices and take back control of their own nutrition. The project has confirmed that the prevalence of malnutrition in Derbyshire is similar to the BAPEN findings and they now have a baseline against which the impact of the promotional work can be monitored. Integrated working and engagement has increased since the scrutiny review and there is now agreement in the Health & Wellbeing Board to adopt nutrition of older people as a joint priority for continued multi-agency working.

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