



JOINT MISSION STATEMENT

UK MALNUTRITION AWARENESS WEEK

Ask, Look, Listen. We're ALL in this together.

10th-16th
OCTOBER
2022

UK Malnutrition Awareness Week was founded by the Malnutrition Task Force and BAPEN in 2018 to raise awareness of undernutrition and dehydration in the UK. The campaign seeks to increase understanding of the dangers, risk factors and signs of malnutrition and dehydration amongst health and social care workers, community groups, the public, parliamentarians and policy makers. Following the success of last year, our focus for 2022 is once again on encouraging everybody to work together to improve understanding, identification, prevention and management of malnutrition and dehydration.

The challenge

More than three million people across the UK are either malnourished or at risk of becoming malnourished, with an estimated one million of these people over the age of 65.¹

Since the coronavirus outbreak and in the aftermath of lockdowns, we believe more people are at risk of malnutrition. It is both a cause and a consequence of ill health and is often a hidden problem that goes unnoticed. Malnutrition can have a devastating effect on physical health and emotional wellbeing and can often lead to or exacerbate long-term health problems. Yet sadly many of us are not familiar with the signs, symptoms and risk factors that would help us recognise that a loved one or somebody in our community is at risk of suffering from the condition.

On top of this, the current cost-of-living crisis has meant that many people are feeling extremely worried about how to manage household finances, everything from heating to eating. High price rises in food and energy are forcing people to think twice about what they are buying. These tough decisions may lead to people skipping meals, increasing the risk of vulnerability to malnutrition.

Our vision

We envisage a future for the UK where preventing and managing malnutrition is everybody's business. This means that we want:

- Members of the public to understand the risks, causes, and signs of malnutrition, and know where to access resources and self-screening tools.
- Health and social care professionals to be able to spot the signs and symptoms of malnutrition and routinely screen for malnutrition.
- Policy makers to be engaged in helping to raise the profile of malnutrition (and dehydration) as a public health issue.

Ask, Look, Listen

This year we have a simple request - for everybody to Ask, Look and Listen and recognise that we are ALL in this together.

- **Ask** If you know somebody who may be vulnerable because they are older, because they have health problems, or perhaps because they are isolated, don't be afraid to ask them if they are eating and drinking okay. Don't be afraid to ask about somebody's appetite or ability to prepare food and drink, it could make all the difference and help you stop malnutrition in its tracks.
- **Look** Always be on the lookout for telltale signs of unplanned weight loss such as looser clothing, loose belts or rings or dentures. And remember you won't always see weight loss so keep your eyes open for other signs like empty fridges and cupboards.
- **Listen** carefully to what somebody is telling you about their life. It may not be about eating and drinking directly, but is it about feeling lonely, or losing interest in things that usually give them pleasure? Practice active listening and think about how the way somebody is feeling generally may affect how they are able to look after themselves.

¹ BAPEN, Introduction to Malnutrition, Available at <https://www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/introduction-to-malnutrition?showall=&start=4>.



Malnutrition Task Force
Eating and drinking well in later life



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**Malnutrition Task Force**

Eating and drinking well in later life

The Malnutrition Task Force are united to combat preventable and avoidable malnutrition and dehydration among older people in the UK. Established in 2012, we believe that good nutrition and hydration is vital to enabling older people to live fulfilling and independent lives.

We seek to raise awareness of undernutrition in later life its causes, and provide information and guidance, work with partners across sectors and settings to improve the working lives of older people in the UK.

For more information visit:

<https://www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk/uk-malnutrition-awareness-week-2022>



As UK Malnutrition Awareness Week enters its fifth year, communities are facing some very tough challenges. The lasting impact of Covid19 as well as the cost-of-living crisis mean that even more older people are vulnerable and at a greater risk of becoming malnourished.

With this context and as we approach winter, it's more important than ever that we come together and remember to Ask, Look and Listen for signs of malnutrition in the older people we love and care for.

Throughout UKMAW2022, we're proud to work alongside BAPEN in sharing practical advice and materials, all with a focus on raising awareness of preventable malnutrition and dehydration, and to support people in looking out for neighbours, friends, carers, and family members who may be at risk. This year, I'm especially excited for the Malnutrition Task Force's virtual 'Sharing of Practice' learning day. We hope this will be a fantastic opportunity for exchanging everything from top tips to learnt experiences, to work towards the vision of everybody having access to enough food and drink and timely nutritional care when they need it.

We really are all in this together and if we all play our part, we can become stronger to raise awareness and tackle malnutrition and dehydration. I urge as many people as possible to get involved in the ways that you can with this important campaign.

Dianne Jeffrey CBE DL, Chair, Malnutrition Task Force

**BAPEN**

UKMAW2022 sees BAPEN join forces with the Malnutrition Task Force for the fifth year running to raise awareness of the signs, risk factors, and dangers of malnutrition and dehydration.

Through the week, our aim is to highlight the need for earlier and better identification and management of disease-related malnutrition in the UK. We also want to improve understanding of the needs of people at risk of malnutrition, and support those who rely on artificial nutrition and nutrition support. As part of this, the Malnutrition Action Group – a standing committee of BAPEN – will be running its annual Malnutrition and Nutritional Care Screening Survey. This is a crucial opportunity for us to take the temperature of the malnutrition problem, and I urge as many people as possible from across the nations and in various care settings to participate. It is through actions like screening, reporting, and sharing that we can work together to improve nutritional care standards nationwide.

We believe that partnership and combined efforts are essential to help reduce the burden of malnutrition in the UK today. Please join us this week in spreading key messages as far and wide as possible.

Dr Trevor Smith, BAPEN President

BAPEN is a charity that works tirelessly to raise awareness of malnutrition in the UK. The organisation was founded in 1992 to bring together dietitians, doctors, nurses, patients and pharmacists into an integrated and effective organisation dedicated to improving nutritional care. Our aim is to advance the nutritional care of patients in health and care settings and those at risk of malnutrition within the wider community.

For more information visit:

<https://www.bapen.org.uk/malnutrition-undernutrition/combating-malnutrition/uk-malnutrition-awareness-week>



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