

The scope of this PSP:

Malnutrition means poor nutrition and is a serious condition which happens when not enough food or too much food is eaten. When not enough food is eaten the body starts to use up its own stores of energy (sugar and fat) and protein. This is known as undernutrition and can have harmful effects on the body. When too much food is eaten the body becomes overloaded (over nutrition), which can also lead to harmful effects on the body.

Nutritional screening means the steps taken in healthcare to identifying those who may be at risk of malnutrition, and who may benefit from suitable dietary support. In many UK healthcare settings the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) is used for nutritional screening.

What we are going to include in this work?

For the purposes of this work we are only focussing on undernutrition (including undernutrition in obesity) and nutritional screening. Undernutrition can be difficult to recognise, especially in people who are overweight or obese to start with. Some symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss – clothes, rings, jewellery, dentures may become loose
- Tiredness, loss of energy
- Reduced ability to perform normal tasks
- Reduced physical performance – for example, not being able to walk as far or as fast as usual
- Altered mood – malnutrition can be associated with lethargy and depression
- Poor concentration

This project will consider malnutrition across **all disease states, in all environments**, and in the **adult population** (18 yrs and over). Malnutrition in children is a large area and would benefit from its own separate PSP.

Malnutrition in **specific groups** will be included in this PSP, including but not limited to: the elderly; those with difficulties accessing food; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups; travelling communities; those who are homeless; those in prisons; those in secure units; those with mental health; psychological or social issues.

Treatments for malnutrition that will be included in this work must be a combination of macro and micro nutrients or must be a general improvement in quality of diet. Therefore any oral, supplementary, and alternative therapy treatment for malnutrition will be included; any treatment that is considered artificial will be out of scope.

What will be excluded in this work?

This project will not include malnutrition issues relating to specific diseases, but will take a generic approach across all disease states.

Parenteral and enteral (artificial tube feeding) treatments and single nutrient treatments for malnutrition will be excluded.

Issues relating to access to health care and health care services will be excluded.

Any questions that are asking for help, advice and access to services will be out of scope (if possible signposting will be implemented for these responses).