

REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF MALNUTRITION AND DEHYDRATION IN HOSPITALS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide evidence to the Scrutiny Committee about the Age UK campaign 'Hungry to be Heard' as part of the review of malnutrition and dehydration in hospitals.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee has been pursuing a review of the management of malnutrition and dehydration in hospitals.

2.2 Aim of the Review

To review strategies to support the decision-making of health professionals involved in the provision of food and fluids, nutritional support and public health advice/interventions for Sunderland hospital inpatients in order to manage avoidable malnutrition and dehydration.

2.3 Terms of Reference

- To consider the whole process for providing hospital meals: menu/nutritional planning; preparation; meal time; monitoring [who is eating their meal]; and clear-up;
- To explore issues around the identification of patients who are admitted to hospital malnourished and whether that status has changed on discharge;
- To explore reasons why patients are not eating their meals;
- To establish how patients who find it difficult to feed themselves are supported to do so;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of management, treatment and education/training programmes relevant to malnutrition and dehydration;
- To explore what happens to monitoring information and how it is used to ensure all people receive the nutrition they require.

3. Age UK Campaign

- 3.1 The review was selected following a number of national research studies highlighting the risks including the national Age Concern campaign.

- 3.2 In 2006 Age Concern published Hungry to be Heard, a report into malnourished older people in hospital that argued for a change in culture and practice. It

recommends seven steps that hospitals should take to end the malnourishment of older people.

3.3 The campaign aimed for every ward in every hospital to implement seven steps to end malnutrition in hospital:

Step 1 - Listen to us

We must be consulted about hospital menus, our meal requirements and our preferences, and hospital staff must respond to what we tell them.

Step 2 - All ward staff must become 'food aware'

Ward staff need to take responsibility for our food needs in hospital.

Step 3 - Hospital staff must follow professional codes

Hospital staff must follow their own professional codes and guidance from other bodies.

Step 4 - Assess us for malnourishment

As many of us are malnourished on admission to hospital, we should all be weighed and our height measured on admission.

Step 5 - Introduce protected mealtimes

Protected mealtimes will ensure we are given appropriate assistance to eat meals when needed and sufficient time to eat our meals.

Step 6 - Use a red tray system

Those of us who need help with eating should be identified on admission and our meal placed on a red tray to signal the need for help.

Step 7 - Use mealtime volunteers

Where appropriate, hospital should use trained volunteers to provide additional help and support to us at mealtimes.

3.4 In August 2010 Age UK published Still Hungry to be Heard which follows the campaigning report Hungry to be Heard, published four years earlier.

3.5 The report recognises that there are examples of good practice across the country, but not enough has changed since the original report in 2006 to change outcomes. The report is critical about the way malnutrition is tackled among older people in hospitals.

3.6 Age UK Sunderland recently carried out a Hospital Meals Survey in support of the national Hungry to be Heard campaign. The results of the survey are attached for members' information as Appendix 1.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Committee is asked to receive evidence at the meeting about the campaign and the implementation of the seven steps to end malnutrition in

hospitals and consider how the campaign issues are complementary with the review.

5. Background Papers

Health & Well Being Scrutiny Committee Reports

- Work Programme and Policy Review Report 9 June 2010
- Evidence from City Hospitals Sunderland 10 November 2010

Age Concern 'Hungry to be Heard'

Age UK 'Still Hungry to be Heard'

Contact Officer: Karen Brown
Health Scrutiny Officer
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk

