

Nutrition Improvement Collaborative

Case Studies

Trust name	University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
Provider type	Acute
Site (if applicable)	Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Core service	

The issue: One third (32%) of people aged 65 years or over are at risk of malnutrition on admission to hospital. 50% of people admitted to hospital from care homes are at risk of malnutrition. Malnourished people are more likely to be admitted to hospital and stay in hospital longer.

We identified that not all registered nurses were competent in nutritional screening using the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST).

The solution: To increase the number of registered nurses trained in nutritional screening to 90% and for 95% all patients to undergo nutritional screening within 6 hrs of admission.

What we did: We undertook nutritional screening education for all registered nursing staff and completed a hospital wide nutrition audit.

We also developed a “Practice Development Team Mythbuster” highlighting the need to ensure accurate weight measurement and deter the use of estimated weights when completing the MUST score. This was published as part of the Nutrition Week celebrations in March 2018. Nutrition week hosted a competency amnesty providing registered nurses with the opportunity to complete their MUST competencies.

The following additional activities to improve nutritional care are also underway:

- Developing Dining Companions
- Supportive mealtimes audit
- Nasogastric feeding audit
- Parenteral feeding audit
- Weighing scales audit
- Chef teaching regarding special diets
- Roll out of new dementia/disability friendly crockery to all wards
- Monitoring Patient Experience
- Provision of afternoon teas and social eating

The impact: In January 2018 the number of registered nurses competent in the use of the MUST was 67%. April 2018 results are showed that 78% of 834 registered nurses were assessed as MUST competent. In addition, 84% dietitians and assistants received MUST training.

The number of MUST scores completed hospital wide in February 2018 was 86%. This increased to 88% in April 2018 and 90% in July 2018.

In March 2018, we conducted an additional mini audit to review the accuracy of MUST scores, appropriateness of dietetic referral and use of estimated weights. This audit was completed on 9 QEHB wards/ departments and illustrated that before the Nutrition Week training 40% of the 57 referrals received were accurate and that 41% of the screening results were based on estimated weights. Following the training 54% of the 57 referrals received were accurate and use of estimated weight reduced to 25%.

A hospital wide nutrition audit on 38 wards/departments was also completed. A total of 372 patient's experience of the mealtime was audited. The results of this audit were:

- On 16 wards that patients were encouraged to eat socially.
- Carers/visitors were helping at mealtimes on 31 of the wards.
- Non-urgent clinical procedures were observed to be taking place during the mealtime on 5 wards

Next steps and sustainability: We will be continuing to monitor the compliance of competency of MUST for registered nurses. We are also reviewing University Hospitals Birmingham Nutrition Strategy in view of our merger with Heart of England.

Want to know more?

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For more information on our nutrition and hydration work, email

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