

## **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 identify those who may be **at risk of malnutrition**, and who may benefit from **suitable nutritional 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, depression or a general lack of interest
- Poor concentration

This project will consider malnutrition across **all diseases, in all settings**, and in the **adult population** (18 yrs and over). Malnutrition in children is a large field of study 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 secure units and prisons; refugees; those with social and psychological issues: and those with mental health issues or conditions, some of which may be severe.

**Treatments** for malnutrition that will be included in this work must be a strategy involving combinations of macro and micronutrients aiming to improve nutritional intake using the oral route. Therefore any oral, supplementary, and alternative therapy treatment for malnutrition will be included; any treatment that is considered artificial (i.e. feeding via a tube or vein) 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).