

Hampshire Falls Prevention Strategy

2019-2022

1. Context

Falls and fractures are a common and serious health issue faced by older people causing distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence, loss of independence and early mortality. Around one in three people over 65 years old, and half of those aged 80 years and over fall at least once a year. Falls, and the subsequent support needs, have a significant impact on health and social care services. In 2016/17 there were 210,553 emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over in England.

Injuries from falls are the most common and costly injury event for older people. With increased frailty and osteoporosis, the consequences of falling can be significant, resulting in fractures, particularly fractured neck of femur. Fragility fractures cost the UK approximately £4.4bn of which £1.1bn is for social care. Hip fractures alone account for around £2bn of this figure. A third of people with a hip fracture die within a year.

This strategy sets out Hampshire's plans to reduce falls and injuries due to a fall by taking a system wide approach to falls prevention, a commitment made in the Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy (2016-2021)¹.

Overall in Hampshire almost 79,000 people aged 65 and over will have experienced a fall within the last 12 months. The proportion of people experiencing a fall increases with age and 43% of people aged 80 years and over will have a fall. The number of falls across Hampshire is expected to increase in the coming years, particularly for those aged 85 and over as this is where the population growth is predicted to be highest. Applying modelled proportions of people who fall to local population estimates suggests that in 2023 over 90,000 people aged 65 and over in Hampshire will have experienced a fall within the last 12 months.

In Hampshire there was a total spend of £21.2m on all hospital admissions due to falls in 2017/18. As this cost does not include costs of surgery, aftercare or primary care, the true cost of health care following a fall could be much higher. We estimate that the 6,052 emergency admissions to hospital due to a fall in 2016/17 for Hampshire residents may have resulted in an additional £9m in social care costs.

The strategy has been informed by a local needs assessment and national policy and guidance, including the Public Health England Falls and Fracture Consensus Statement² and NICE guidance 'Falls in Older People'³. There are over 400 risk factors associated with falling⁴ making it a complex issue to tackle. Effective falls prevention requires a whole system approach that combines both universal and targeted actions. The falls needs assessment that has informed this strategy highlighted that the current provision of falls prevention initiatives in Hampshire is multi-layered, with some aspects having evolved locally and others county-wide. This strategy provides the opportunity for partners to work together

¹ <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/public-health/TowardsahealthierHampshireastrategyforimprovingthepublicshealth2016-2021.pdf>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586382/falls_and_fractures_consensus_statement.pdf

³ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs86>

⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs86/chapter/quality-statement-2-multi-factorial-risk-assessment-for-older-people-at-risk-of-falling>

on agreed priorities to ensure that Hampshire residents are able to benefit from effective, high quality falls prevention.

2. Scope of the strategy

The partnership falls prevention strategy aims to fulfil the recommendations of the Hampshire Falls Needs Assessment and deliver a system wide, evidence based approach to primary and secondary falls prevention.

In line with the relative risk of falls across the population, the strategy focusses on people over 65 years who live or access services in Hampshire, but those in younger groups who are considered particularly at risk are also in scope. Falls prevention is not age-bounded and healthy ageing is fundamental to maintaining functional ability in later life. Therefore linked programmes which focus on upstream prevention, for example the Hampshire Physical Activity Strategy, underpin the ambition of this strategy.

The strategy focuses on falls prevention within the community and the services provided by secondary care to treat injuries caused by falls are not within the scope. Services either side of hospital admission are included. This includes discharge and reablement services that are important to help avoid repeat falls.

3. Our approach to delivering the Falls Prevention Strategy

As the services and support relevant to falls prevention span a number of organisations and sectors, a cross-agency Falls Prevention Steering Group was established in 2018 to develop the strategy and oversee delivery (appendix 1). Progress on the work of the steering group will be reported as part of the governance arrangements for the Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy.

By working in partnership we can ensure joined up, consistent practice that leads to the smoother transition between services. We will evaluate what we are doing now in order to scale up effective interventions.

4. Our vision

To prevent and reduce the negative impact of falls to enable people in Hampshire to live independently for longer.

5. Strategic priorities

The strategic priorities are informed by local need and national research and guidance on what works to prevent falls. Our approach is centred on identifying those who are at risk of falls, and ensuring that there are accessible, evidence based opportunities for them to reduce that risk. We will have a particular focus on the home environment as we know that

this is where the majority of falls occur. The priorities are underpinned by workforce development to enable staff and volunteers to be confident and competent in delivering falls prevention support.

The three priorities for this falls prevention strategy are:

- Identification and case finding - identify people at risk of falls and refer or signpost to appropriate support
- Evidence based support – ensure that people have access to opportunities and interventions that will reduce their risk of falling at an early stage, particularly focussing on the home environment and strength and balance exercises
- Developing the workforce – increase knowledge and skills around falls prevention in relevant staff groups and volunteers at a level appropriate to their role

For each strategic priority, we describe what we know to be effective in falls prevention and the areas that should be the focus for action over the life over the three year strategy. We have identified actions that will be prioritised in the first year, and others that will be implemented in the second and third year of the strategy (denoted by 1, 2 and 3 respectively below).

5.1. Strategic priority 1

Identification and case finding - identify people at risk of falls and refer or signpost to appropriate support

What works

- Cross sector collaboration to reduce exposure to risk factors across the life course
- Raising awareness of falls being preventable
- Assessment of risk of fracture in relevant population groups
- Health and care professionals and organisations routinely asking older people about falls
- Using primary care consultations as an opportunity for case finding

What we are going to do

	Objective	Year of strategy
i	Increase awareness of falls including how to reduce risk factors for falling	1
ii	Review falls pathways in Hampshire to understand how people transition through the different stages and identify where improvements can be made	1
iii	Promote the use of recommended tools to assess risk of falls and fracture in different settings	2/3
iv	Review referral processes and use insight to increase uptake into appropriate falls prevention interventions	2/3
v	Establish links between pathways for falls, frailty and musculoskeletal conditions	1

5.2. Strategic priority 2

Evidence based support – ensure that people have access to opportunities and interventions that will reduce their risk of falling at an early stage, particularly focussing on the home environment and strength and balance exercises

What works

- Interventions such as strength and balance exercises, home hazard assessments, vision assessment and medication reviews
- Strength and balance programmes which comprise of a minimum of 50 hours or more delivered for at least two hours a week
- Housing practitioners or occupational therapists assessing risks in the home environment
- Home adaptations such as installing handrails on unsafe stairs

What we are going to do

	Objective	Year of strategy
i	Review current provision of strength and balance programmes using evaluation and insight, to ensure they are delivered in line with the latest evidence	1
ii	Scale up opportunities for strength and balance content of existing exercise activities, outside formal falls prevention classes	2/3
iii	Identify and reduce falls hazards in the home through Safe and Well visits conducted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service	1
iv	Provide feedback to district Local Plans and planning applications for large developments to recommend modifications to the built environment which support healthy ageing	1
v	Promote the use of effective falls prevention technology in the home	2/3
vi	Develop falls prevention initiatives in care home settings, informed by the evaluation of the hydrate pilot	1
vii	Scope opportunities with housing providers to maximise falls prevention features in their stock through minor works, refurbishments and new builds	1

5.3. Strategic priority 3

Developing the workforce – increase knowledge and skills around falls prevention in relevant staff groups and volunteers at a level appropriate to their role

What works

- For people identified at high risk of falls or fractures, an evidence-based and comprehensive risk assessment should be carried out by a trained healthcare professional.
- Older people coming into contact with professionals and organisations which have health and care as part of their remit should be asked routinely about falls
- Develop workforce competency in relevant professional groups including clinicians, allied health professionals, emergency ambulance crews, social workers, employees of

voluntary and community sector organisations working with older people and members of the Fire and Rescue Service

What we are going to do

	Objective	Year of strategy
i	Undertake a training needs analysis with a range of frontline staff and volunteers to understand their development needs around identifying and supporting people at risk of falls	1
ii	Develop a competency framework which sets out recommended falls prevention knowledge and skills for non-specialist (including volunteers) and specialist workforces	1
iii	Incorporate standards for knowledge and skills around key risk factors for falls into existing relevant workforce development programmes (including vision assessment, bone health and medication reviews)	2
iv	Incorporate signposting to falls prevention support as part of the Making Every Contact Count programme	1
v	Develop a tiered model of strength and balance training	2

6. Resources

There is no dedicated financial or staffing resource to deliver this strategy; instead, partners are committing to use the priorities identified in the strategy to inform actions within their own organisations and to work together strategically on the agreed themes to prevent falls.

7. How we will measure success

Action plans will be developed to detail how the strategic priorities are delivered. These will include indicators which will enable the steering group to monitor progress over the life of the strategy.

Appendix 1

Falls prevention strategy steering group – organisations represented

Hampshire County Council (Public Health- chair, Reablement, Workforce Development)

North East Hampshire & Farnham CCG

North Hampshire CCG

South Eastern Hampshire and Fareham & Gosport CCG

Fareham & Gosport & South Eastern Hampshire CCG

West Hampshire CCG

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust

Walk and Live Confidently Team, Fleet Hospital

SCAS

SeCAMB

Argenti

Age Concern Hampshire

Rushmoor Borough Council

Hart District Council

Winchester City Council

VIVID

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Energise Me - physical activity and sport charity