

IMPLEMENTATION OF A FALLS STRATEGY FOR SUNDERLAND 2023 – 2026

Report of the Director of Adult Services / Chief Operating Officer of SCAS

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board in respect of the activity on falls prevention and the management of falls.
- 1.2 To seek endorsement from the Health and Wellbeing Board of the new Falls Strategy for Sunderland (2023 – 2026).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Falls prevention is a priority within the Healthy City Plan, with key outcome measures within the Plan including reductions in emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over, and reductions in hip fractures in people aged 65 and over.
- 2.2 In 2022, the Ageing Well Delivery Board sponsored the employment of a Falls Coordinator to reinvigorate the city's approach to the management of falls. From employment in June 2022, the post holder has developed a network of teams and services across voluntary, community, health and social care services and re-established a multi-agency group to work as a collaborative to both prevent and manage falls.
- 2.3 In addition to delivering a programme of activity, the Falls Coordinator has worked with the multi-agency group to develop a strategy founded on the collective ambition in Sunderland to achieve a culture in which falls are not inevitable and all of our services are working together to actively prevent the incidence of falls.

3.0 Content and Anticipated Outcomes of the Falls Strategy

- 3.1 In 2020/21 there were 1,615 emergency admissions to hospital arising from a fall, giving Sunderland one of the highest falls related emergency admission rates in England and one of the highest emergency admission rates related to hip fracture. The evidence indicates that this rate has been steadily rising since 2018.
- 3.2 Based on the 2021, census, approximately 20.5% of the population is aged 65 years and above. From the known statistics, approximately 30% of the population aged 65 years and above will have one fall a year. Based on the this, we can anticipate that there will be 17,000 people who fall a year in

Sunderland, at least 50% of whom will have more than one fall a year, leading to an estimation of over 33,000 falls in our city a year.

3.3 There are multiple contributing factors for the high falls rate in Sunderland including:

- Low healthy life expectancy - Sunderland has one of the lowest healthy life expectancy rates in England at 56.9 years for women (England average 63.9 years) and 56.1 years for men (England average 63.1 years).
- Social deprivation - 21.7% or 14,833 older people older were living in poverty during 2019. This is significantly higher than the England average of 14.2%. Overall, Sunderland is ranked 4th highest in the North East for older people living in poverty.
- High levels of alcohol consumption and smoking – in 2021, Sunderland had the highest rate of alcohol related mortality in the North East and 15.2% of adults in the city described themselves as smokers. There is a strong correlation between smoking and Chronic Obstructive Airways Disease, which in turn gives rise to an increased risk of falls as a result of reduced oxygen supply to vital organs.
- The impact of Covid-19 on older people – this includes the physical impact of contracting the virus, the delay in seeking medical intervention and diagnosis in respect of ill health at the height of the pandemic, the impact of inactivity whilst remaining at home leading to significant deconditioning and the withdrawal from social activity.

3.4 The Multi-Agency Falls Group comprises of representation from the following agencies:

- Community Therapy Service, Sunderland City Council
- Public Health, Sunderland City Council
- Acute Therapy Services, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Recovery at Home, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Community Nursing Services, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Acute and Community Therapy Services, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- Community Falls Service, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Gentoo
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Age UK Sunderland
- Patient Safety Services, South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust
- Tissue Viability Service, South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust
- Community Pharmacy, South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust
- Technology Enabled Care and Telecare, Sunderland Care and Support

- Farmborough Court, Sunderland Care and Support

Membership of the group remains open and is continually growing.

3.5 The vision for the Falls Strategy (see appendix 1) is to make the prevention of falls everybody's business, achieving a culture in which falls are not inevitable and all of our services are working together to actively prevent the incidence of falls. The strategy sets out the importance of improving the management of falls in Sunderland and highlights a set of principals against which activity over the next three years will be based.

3.6 The strategy also takes account of current NICE guidance in respect of falls management. It should be noted that revised NICE guidance is due for publication in 2024. Sunderland's strategy has anticipated of the recommendation to promote the management of falls in people aged over 55 years, which is expected to be promoted in the new NICE guidance.

3.7 The table below sets out the eight principals of the Falls Strategy.

1	We will work with a set of consistent falls assessment tools that promote a set of shared principals.
2	We will develop a matrix that sets out the falls training that is available in the city and ensure that all training promotes a set of shared principals.
3	We will develop a directory of services that contribute to the management of falls in the city and we will develop a set of model customer journeys that will ensure we make the best use of the resources available to us.
4	We will promote and actively contribute to the development of the preventative offer in respect of falls in the city and we will create connections between preventative and clinical services.
5	We will make evidence based decisions in respect of the management of falls and we will develop a data set that will inform the work of the Multi-Agency Falls Group.
6	We will promote the use of innovative technology in the management of falls.
7	We will continually raise awareness in respect of falls prevention and falls management, making falls everyone's business.
8	We will strive to achieve excellence in our partnership working with regard to the management of falls.

3.8 These principals have been agreed following consultation with the partner agencies who make up the falls group and the also the following groups:

- The Care Homes and Community Services Partnership Group
- The Ageing Well Delivery Board
- The Ageing Well Group, Altogether Better

- The Acute and Community Therapies Partnership Group

The city's Ageing Well Ambassadors have also endorsed the principals of the falls strategy and agreed to work in partnership with the Multi-Agency Falls Group to promote falls awareness.

3.9 In addition to the mobilisation of the falls group and the development of the strategy, the Falls Coordinator has:

- Implemented an ongoing falls awareness training programme for health, social care, community services and voluntary organisations
- Delivered a range of activity during Falls Week in September 2022, including a review of mobility aids in care homes, community outreach activity that invited residents in Town End Farm to review their personal falls risks and consider how to manage them and social media activity to raise falls awareness
- Developed a model for improving the management of falls in care homes and implemented this in Farmborough Court, with further roll out planned with other care home providers
- Worked in partnership with Public Health colleagues in the delivery of the strength and balance programme

3.10 The group is now engaged in the development of a comprehensive action plan to underpin the strategy, with the following projects already underway:

- An "Awareness into Action" campaign for Falls Awareness Week, September 2023 that has delivered a comprehensive training programme across health and social care teams in the city in respect of what a well maintained mobility aid should look like, provided the necessary equipment to deliver walking stick and walking frame MOTs both as a targeted action plan but also embedding this knowledge and into the skills set of over 150 health and social care professionals working with older people every day
- Scoping of an on-line level one falls assessment that can be undertaken as a self or mediated assessment
- Continuous roll out of mobility equipment reviews in the city's care homes
- Tech based projects including the following devices: RITA ITU, hydration cups, wellbeing sensors
- Development of community outreach opportunities in respect of mobility assessment and falls prevention
- The mapping and development of a core set of customer journeys to ensure that Sunderland residents access the right services, in the right place at the right time

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 The Board is recommended to:

- a) endorse the Sunderland's Fall Strategy (2023 – 2026)
- b) delegate delivery of the strategy to the Ageing Well Delivery Board; and
- c) receive progress updates on the delivery of the strategy via the Ageing Well Delivery Board.

