

Falls Awareness Week Briefing

Building on past successes and aligned with prudent healthcare approaches, we are putting our older citizens at the heart of **#FallsAwareness2021** week.

Our campaign is called *Steady on Stay Safe*. This is a systematic, public health approach based on similar, very successful, attempts at reaching as many older people in the community as can be reached, comparable to community deployment in Canterbury New Zealand. Evidence from studies in the Southern Hemisphere indicate a 25-30% reduction in the incidence of falls that require health intervention.

Does it cost anything? No, all we require is your time. **#FallsAwareness2021** week is taking place from **July 12th to 18th** and our only ask is that you take 2 minutes to talk to older people that use your service.

Falls Awareness More Important Than Ever

Covid-19 has impacted on all our lives in so many ways but for the most vulnerable the impacts have been devastating. The *Stay at Home* and *Stay Safe* messages have been critical to the success of the public health campaign to fight the virus but have had a significant impact on the wellbeing of many sections of society and particularly older people. It's important to recognise that there has been a significant increase in mental health and loneliness due to social isolation, and levels of deconditioning have occurred associated with a sedentary *Stay at Home* message.

Research undertaken by the Centre for Ageing Better and the Kings Fund, including experiences shared through the National Prudent Healthcare Falls Prevention Taskforce state:

- Data have shown a huge decrease in A&E attendances, with a 42% drop in May 2020 compared with May 2019. There have also been decreases in the number of GP appointments.
- The Welsh Ambulance Trust have seen significant reductions in frequent faller episodes over the most intense 'lockdown' periods and even when they have been called out, there has been a reluctance to go to hospital.
- 67% of over-65s are living with one or more serious long-term health conditions which, if left untreated, are more likely to get worse more quickly.
- 65% - over two thirds of people say concerns about the coronavirus are making them minimise all interaction with others, even where the rules allow it.
- 53% - over half of UK adults agree that a reduction in social contact during lockdown has made their life harder.

- Nearly a third of adults in Britain (31%) reported having physical or mental health problems because of the condition of their homes during lockdown.

What Can You Do To Help

You can encourage colleagues to help as the conversation is easy and structured to falls risks; all you need to do is have a conversation and ask: “*have you fallen?*”, or “*do you fear falling?*” or “*had any falls recently?*” If the answer is YES, then you can talk of primary falls risks and urge older people to seek help to ensure that they lower the risk of falling again and maybe suffering a serious injury.

We are sending out leaflets to be displayed in prominent places, i.e. desks, notice boards, display stands, on doors and in classes and clinics. They are a prompt to remind you to start that vital conversation and a help to draw attention to the focus on falls risks. Quite often it is as much about encouraging clients/service users to adopt a more positive and healthy lifestyle: timely advice is key to reducing risks, and you can get more information by visiting the following websites:

Care & Repair Cymru: www.careandrepair.org.uk

Age Cymru: www.agecymru.org.uk

Age Connects: www.ageconnectswales.org.uk

For those older people that are happy to talk and interested in getting help, the leaflet emphasises key risks and provides contact numbers for them to seek help.

We will be using social media all week to promote the message that falls are not an inevitable part of growing old. Join the conversation by using the hashtag **#FallsAwareness2021**

We'd love to know what you did during Falls Awareness Week, how you promoted Steady on Stay Safe and how many older people you reached. You can send your feedback, photos, comments and stories to: comms@careandrepair.org.uk

 Steady on... Stay SAFE



Steady on Stay Safe: Falls are not an inevitable consequence of growing older!

Remember: falls are everyone's business, don't delay, ask the question today!