

## Agenda item 6

## DERBYSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

29 June 2017

## Report of the Director of Public Health

## FALLS PATHWAY

**1. Purpose of the report:**

To present a proposed pathway for the prevention and management of falls involving older people across Derbyshire and request the Health and Wellbeing Board agree the pathway and support its adoption.

**2. Information and analysis:**Rationale

Falls and fall-related injuries are a common and serious problem for older people. People aged 65 and older have the highest risk of falling, with 30% of people older than 65 and 50% of people older than 80 falling at least once a year<sup>1</sup>. The human cost of falling includes distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence, loss of independence and mortality. Falls are estimated to cost the NHS more than £2.3 billion per year<sup>1</sup>.

Many groups of people are at a higher risk of falls however, the main concern is not simply the high incidence of falls in older people, but the combination of a high incidence and a high susceptibility to injury due to the risk of fragility fractures (fractures that result from mechanical forces that would not ordinarily result in fracture, known as low-level (or 'low energy') trauma)<sup>2</sup>. In Derbyshire it is estimated that around 56,000 older people will fall each year<sup>3</sup>, with around 3,500 admitted to hospital with falls related injuries<sup>2</sup>. In 2015/16 there were 950 hip fractures in Derbyshire<sup>4</sup> almost all of which were as a result of a fall.

The number of people in Derbyshire aged over 65 is expected to rise from 169,000 in 2017 to 249,000 in 2037, an increase of 47%. This is likely to be associated with a corresponding increase in numbers of falls, particularly in those aged over 80. Reducing falls will help support the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) TP priority regarding prevention, self-management and community resilience.

From the 1 July, there will be a new contractual requirement on GP practices that will require them to routinely identify moderate and severe frailty in patients aged 65

years and over, and for those identified as severe that they ask patients about falls and offer appropriate interventions<sup>5</sup>.

### Pathway Development

The pathway presented here is a key action arising from the recommendations in the Falls in Older People Needs Assessment presented to the Adult Care Board in March 2017. The pathway has been developed by a working group consisting of representatives of Public Health, Adult Care, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), primary care, Derbyshire Community Health Services, East Midlands Ambulance Service and acute care.

The pathway:

- Encourages a collaborative and whole system approach to prevention and management of falls amongst older people
- Promotes healthy ageing and helping people take care of themselves to reduce their risk of falls
- Reflects the multi-factorial causes of falls and the association between falls and frailty
- Facilitates the identification of those at higher risk and that they are offered appropriate evidence based interventions
- Is compliant with NICE guidance<sup>1</sup> and supports the objectives of the Public Health England Falls and Fractures Consensus Statement<sup>6</sup>

A copy of the draft pathway is attached as an Annex to this report.

### Next Steps

The pathway will be supported by guidance that will provide more detailed information on the risk factors for falls, local services etc. It is also intended to provide training on falls and the pathway to health, social care and other professionals who are in regular contact with older people (e.g. housing wardens).

Due to the large number of professionals that could benefit from the training it is intended to gradually roll it out across the County, beginning with STP Places such as Chesterfield, who have identified falls in older people as a priority.

The pathway is part of a wider work programme to address falls amongst older people. A working group is currently developing an action plan to take forward the recommendations in the Falls in Older People Needs Assessment. In addition work is also taking place within CCG's and at STP Place and the need to ensure that this work is 'joined up' is being recognised.

Whilst the development and implementation of the pathway is seen as beneficial in helping to reduce the risk of falls amongst older people, and that the pathway reflects National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance that was originally published in 2004, it needs to be recognised that its adoption and implementation could lead to a significant increase in referrals to existing 'falls' services which could be overwhelmed with demand. The impact on existing services will be monitored by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) working group and partners will seek to work collaboratively to make the most efficient use of existing resources.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to agree the falls pathway and support its adoption.

**Dean Wallace**  
**Director of Public Health**

## References

1. [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\). Falls: assessment and prevention of falls in older people \(CG161\). Full guideline. London: NICE, 2013](#)
2. [Kanis JA, Oden A, Johnell O et al. \(2001\) The burden of osteoporotic fractures: a method for setting intervention thresholds. Osteoporosis International 12: 417–27](#)
3. [Derby and Derbyshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Falls in Older People, 2017](#)
4. [Public Health England Outcomes Framework](#)
5. [BMA and NHS Employers, Identification and Management of Patients with Frailty – Summary of Changes to GMS Contract, 2017](#)
6. [Public Health England, Falls and Fractures Consensus Statement, 2017](#)

## Annex

