2020 JSNA

Frailty and Falls
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Key findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Frailty estimates and risk factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Falls prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Estimates of fall prevalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Carecall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ambulance conveyances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hospital admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Deaths from accidental falls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key findings

Frailty is related to the ageing process, that is, simply getting older.

Anyone can have a fall, but older people and those who are frail are more likely to fall, and are more likely to experience long term effects after falling, especially if they have a long-term health condition. Most falls do not result in serious injury but can have a negative impact on someone’s wellbeing and confidence and might contribute to social isolation and health deterioration.

- 21,450 falls each year
- 2,350 care call visits due to falls
- 1,900 ambulance trips due to falls
- 1,615 hospital admissions due to falls
- 355 hospital admissions due to hip fracture
- 75 deaths due to falls each year
Definitions of frailty and falls

Frailty is related to the ageing process, that is, simply getting older. It describes how our bodies gradually lose their in-built reserves, leaving us vulnerable to dramatic, sudden changes in health triggered by seemingly small events such as a minor infection or a change in medication or environment. In medicine, frailty defines the group of older people who are at highest risk of adverse outcomes such as falls, disability, admission to hospital, or the need for long-term care.

Older people with moderate to severe frailty are often well known to local health and social care professionals. They usually have weak muscles and also usually have other conditions like arthritis, poor eyesight, deafness and memory problems. This means older people with frailty will walk slowly, get exhausted easily and struggle to get out of a chair or climb stairs. Typically therefore they are housebound, or only able to leave their home with help. This can be a simple practical way to identify people who are frail.

Anyone can have a fall, but older people and those who are frail are more likely to fall, and are more likely to experience long term effects after falling, especially if they have a long-term health condition. Around 1 in 3 adults over 65 who live at home will have at least one fall a year, and about half of these will have more frequent falls.

Most falls do not result in serious injury. But there's always a risk that a fall could lead to pain, injuries such as broken bones and loss of mobility. Falls and the fear of falling can cause the people to lose confidence, become withdrawn and socially isolated, become depressed and feel they have lost their independence.

The risk of falling is particularly related to:
• balance problems and muscle weakness
• poor vision
• long-term health conditions, such as heart disease, dementia or low blood pressure (hypotension), which can lead to dizziness and a brief loss of consciousness

Osteoporosis can lead to more significant problems as a result of falling.

It is worth noting that not all older people live with frailty, and not all people living with frailty are old.
How many older people in Stockport are frail?

The electronic frailty index (eFI) is a tool that can be used to identify people as they progress through different levels of frailty, and is based upon a person’s needs, assessed at routine interactions with their GP. 36 different potential frailty risks are considered (see left), including diseases such as heart disease, symptoms such as polypharmacy (having multiple prescription drugs) or dizziness and disability such as vision impairment or being housebound.

Each person receives a score which places them on a frailty scale (see left), from not frail through to severe frailty.
In 2017 an eFrailty assessment of Stockport’s over 65 population was undertaken, as a one off exercise. This showed that more than half of the over 65 population are not frail, but that 42.2% of the population had some degree of frailty; 9% being either moderately or severely frail.

In numbers this equates to an estimated 650 people with severe frailty and 4,750 with a moderate level of frailty; an additional 19,900 people have a milder level of frailty.

It is hoped in the future this data will be available more regularly and used for proactive care and support.
Frailty and Falls Risk Factors

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones, making them more likely to break. It develops over several years and usually goes unnoticed until a fracture occurs. 5,850 people aged 65+ in Stockport have a diagnosis of osteoporosis, around 10% of the population. More than 80% of these people are female, due to hormonal changes at menopause.

Polypharmacy is associated with a higher risk of falls, and more than 11,600 people aged 65+ in Stockport were regularly prescribed 8 or more unique medications.
Falls Prevention

Falls in older people can be prevented by improving conditions in the home by removing clutter, doing regular strength and balance training, reviewing medication, having regular sight tests, eating well and limiting alcohol intake will also help in this.

The Steady in Stockport falls and fracture prevention and bone health program supports people to take steps to reduce risk of falling.

The falls prevention service launched in November 2017 and in the 16 months to April 2019 received 2,670 referrals.
Falls Prevention

SMILE is a low impact and gentle exercise concept developed by Life Leisure. The programme provides a fun, engaging and adaptable exercise and physical activity sessions for older adults and those with long term health conditions or disabilities to help improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October to September</th>
<th>Number of people registered</th>
<th>Total number of sessions attended</th>
<th>Average weekly visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Average age registered: 75-84 years old
- Gender of participants: 22% male / 78% female
- Number of participants in priority areas: 82

Stay Steady is a 6 month falls prevention exercise programme delivered by Life Leisure in partnership with Stockport MBC and Stockport Together, which supports participants to remain steady on their feet through simple but effective exercises. All classes are delivered by qualified Postural Stability instructors who provide a safe and enjoyable environment to encourage participants to gradually improve their strength, balance, coordination and mobility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October to September</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
<th>Active participants</th>
<th>Completers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Average age registered: 75-84 years old
- Gender of participants: 32% male / 68% female
- % of referrals from the most deprived quintile: 10%
How many older people in Stockport have a fall?

There is no definitive record of the number of falls in Stockport each year, as many falls cause no or minor injuries which do not lead to the need for care.

It is, however, possible to estimate by combining information collected from a variety of sources.

The next few pages set out the best data for Stockport based on national evidence, local GP data and hospital data.

National evidence

NICE state that 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. In Stockport this would equate to:

- 12,950 falls each year for those aged 65 to 79 years
- 8,500 falls each year for those aged 80 years and above
- **In total 21,450 falls each year for those aged 65+**
History of fall: 6,900 with fall recorded by GPs

The data extracted from GP practices does not indicate when a fall occurred nor severity of injury from a fall, further investigation is needed to refine this information.

However, the data does show that 6,880 people aged 65+ have a history of fall recorded, 4,695 females and 2,185 men – over 10% of all women aged 65 and over have a history of a fall on their medical record.

As expected the numbers of people recorded rise as age increases.

The prevalence rate of history of fall is higher in deprived areas and lower in less deprived areas, however due to the different age and population size there are still higher numbers in the less deprived areas.
Carecall in Stockport

Carecall is a 24 hour telemonitoring and response service for older and vulnerable people. The service is provided by Stockport Homes. Carecall helps support those who are:

• at increased risk of falling;
• at risk of admission / re-admission to hospital;
• returning home from hospital or intermediate care;
• in the early stages of dementia; or
• require support, reassurance and assistance to maintain their independence.

Customers are provided with an alarm unit and a pendant, should they need help they can press the pendant and an alarm is raised at the Telecare Centre.

- For the year 1st Dec 2018 – 30th Nov 2019 at any one time there was an average of 4,500 customers using the Carecall service in Stockport.
- During that time, the Carecall Service attended 4,138 emergency visits. An emergency visit could be a fall, a no-voice contact or a concern for welfare.
- Of the 4,138 emergency visits, a total of 2,353 were falls, which is 56.9% of the total visits.
- During the 12 month period the Carecall Service handled 188,303 telecare alarm calls which equates to just under 42 calls per service user as an average.
- As an average, there are 0.91 emergency visits per service user per year and 0.52 falls per service user per year.
- A high percentage of the calls/falls are to a small percentage of users – so many do not use the service much, instead using it to give them peace of mind.
Ambulance Conveyance

In the last year Stockport patients were taken by ambulance to A&E as a result of a fall 1,900 times.

The **Steady in Stockport** falls prevention service began in November 2017. In the following months, the adjusted average number of fall-related ambulance conveyances fell from 205 to 159 per month. This was a reduction of 22%.

The proportion of all conveyances that were related to falls also fell during this period, from 8.3% to 7.5%.
Hospital admissions

In 2018/19 1,615 emergency hospital admissions were made by Stockport patients aged 65 and over as a result of a fall.

- 500 admissions were for those aged 65-79
- 1,115 admissions were those aged 80+

Rates have been steady over the last decade, but are significantly higher than the national average.

The fall seen in ambulance conveyances has not been matched in admissions.

In 2018/19 there were 335 emergency hospital admissions made by Stockport patients aged 65 and over as a result of a hip fracture (fracture neck of femur).

- 95 for those aged 65-79
- 240 for those aged 80+

Again rates have been steady, but are at rather than above the national average, suggesting the higher level of admission for falls may not be for the most serious falls.
Almost two thirds of all hospital admissions for falls are for females, with the gender balance being more equal at younger ages.

Fall admissions are most common for those age 75-95, peaking at ages 85-89 years.
More than half of fall-related admissions are recorded as happening in the home (57%), with residential institutions being the second most common location (16%).
In the over-65 age group, from the financial years 2012 to 2018, some small areas* in Stockport had significantly higher numbers of fall-related hospital admissions than other areas.

High numbers of admissions per year were recorded from:

• Hatherlow and Chadkirk (33)
• Lingard Lane, Brinnington (26)
• Davenport (24)
• Woodford Road, Bramhall (22)
• Heaton Chapel (22)

There is a possible link with the location of some larger care homes, and this is explored in the next two pages.

*Small area – lower super output area, a geographic area defined by the Office for National Statistics with an average population of 1,500
Admissions where a fall occurred at home

More than half of fall-related admissions are recorded as happening in a private home.

The mean number of fall-related admissions that occurred at home for each of Stockport’s small areas is 4.4 per year.

Numbers of falls per year are substantially above average in:
- Hatherlow and Chadkirk (16)
- Heaton Chapel (12)
- Davenport (11)

It is unlikely that these falls are linked to care homes.

Admissions data from FY2012-FY2018; over 65 age group; first episode of the admission, ICD-10 codes: W00-W19.
Admissions where a fall occurred at a residential institution

In the financial years 2012-2018, falls in residential institutions accounted for around 16% of fall-related admissions.

Some people may fall within residential institutions but still have their own private address, which the record includes.

Because of this, many small areas without residential homes have admissions counts for falls in care homes that are higher than zero.

Admissions data from FY2012-FY2018; over 65 age group; first episode of the admission, ICD-10 codes: W00-W19.
Fall occurrences by classification (65+)

% of fall-related admissions by classification

- Unspecified fall: 40%
- Same-level slip trip & stumble: 23%
- Same-level other fall: 16%
- Fall on and from stairs and steps: 9%
- Fall involving bed: 5%
- Fall involving chair: 3%
- Fall on and from ladder: 1%
- Other fall from one level to another: 1%
- Fall involving other furniture: 1%
- Fall involving wheelchair: 1%
- Same-level involving ice and snow: 1%
- Other fall classification: 1%

Information about the type of fall are less well complete, with 40% being unspecified.

The majority of falls where codes are added are on the same level (39%) with 9% involving the stairs and 8% beds or chairs.

Admissions data from FY2012-FY2018; over 65 age group; first episode of the admission.
In the over-65 age group, from FY2012 – FY2018, there were an average of 1,460 fall-related admissions per year.

16% of hospital spells were less than 1 day.

Just over half of these admissions had a spell length of under seven days.

Admissions data from FY2012-FY2018; over 65 age group; first episode of the admission.
Deaths from accidental falls (65+)

On average 75 people in Stockport die each year as a result of a fall; death can occur up to 6 months after the fall and is often due to the longer term impact on health rather than the acute injury.

The majority of deaths are for those aged 75 years and above.

Mortality rates in Stockport are more than twice as high as the national average, however previous investigation has shown this to be as a result of local coroner protocols.

The rates of fall deaths are increasing fastest in the oldest age groups.

Large peaks and troughs in the yearly data are linked, in part, to registration delays. For this reason, a moving 3 year average is shown for comparison.