Birmingham City Council

November 2011

Birmingham Falls Prevention Service

Free advice and support for people over 50 in Birmingham

Crystal Mark 19927
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

The Information Standard

adults and communities

Introduction

If you are over 65, there is a one in three chance that you will fall in the next 12 months.

In fact, each year in Birmingham 48,000 people aged over 65 fall and 1,200 of these people (two in every 100 people) break their hip as a result.

No-one wants to fall and risk an injury. Most serious falls happen in and around the home, and can be life-changing.

We are working with health partners and other local organisations to provide the Birmingham Falls Prevention Service to help to try to reduce the number of older people who fall.

How can I tell I am at risk of falling?

If you answer '**Yes**' to two or more of the questions below, you may be at risk of falling.

Do you have problems with balance and walking?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you do little or no exercise?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are there tripping hazards in your home, such as loose rugs, steps, or piles of things on your floor?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you struggle to get around in your home and outside?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have an unhealthy diet?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have physical health difficulties?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you taking four or more medications a day?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have poor eyesight and do not wear the correct glasses to improve this?

Yes ☐ No ☐

What is the Birmingham Falls Prevention Service?

There are many simple things that you can do to reduce your chances of falling and help you to stay or become more independent.

The Birmingham Falls Prevention Service is a free service which can provide you with information and support if you:

- are aged over 50;
- live in Birmingham; and
- have fallen or are worried about falling in the future.

The service is led by a team of skilled falls prevention co-ordinators who can visit you at home to give you advice and support on how to prevent falls or reduce the effect to you if you have a fall. The co-ordinators will also refer you to different local organisations that can help you to stay independent.

The co-ordinators will assess how effective this service was for you and will keep in regular contact with you. The co-ordinators will tell you about risks that could cause you to fall and, where appropriate, will provide you with small pieces of equipment to help you stay independent in your own home. The equipment could include:

- tap turners;
- bottle openers;
- helping hands (a hand-held device to help you pick up objects); and
- bath mats.

What types of services can I get?

The Birmingham Falls Prevention Service can refer you to a range of different services which we and other local organisations offer. We will only refer you to these services if you give us permission to do so.

Some examples of the services you may want to be referred to include:

- specialist teams that you can talk to about equipment that you can use in the home;
- a local optician who will carry out eye tests in your home (this may be free if you meet certain conditions);
- organisations in your local area that offer gentle exercise classes, such as t'ai chi;
- organisations, approved by Age UK, that can carry out repairs in your home and household tasks such as gardening or shopping;
- a benefit review service to check that you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to;
- West Midlands Fire Service who will carry out a free safety check of your home;
- your own pharmacist or GP for a review of your medications;
- social and community groups in your local area;
- 'befriending' services so you can make new friends;
- the library-at-home service; and
- organisations that can help you learn to use a computer and the internet.

We can also give you:

- information for carers; and
- information about how you can become a volunteer.

Am I eligible for this service?

You are eligible for the Falls Prevention Service if you are over 50 years old, live in Birmingham and have fallen or are worried about falling.

This might include you, if you have:

- fallen at home;
- not fallen but feel unsteady or are afraid of falling;
- broken a bone as a result of a recent fall; or
- called an ambulance or been to a hospital accident and emergency ward following a fall.

What support is there if I care for someone who has fallen or is at risk of falling?

We can provide support to people who care for someone who has fallen or is at risk of falling.

You can fill in a Birmingham Falls Prevention Service referral form on behalf of the person you care for.

We can provide information and services that you can use to make the person you care for less likely to fall.

If you would like us to, we can also refer you to support groups for carers.

Contact us using the information on page 7.

How do I use the Birmingham Falls Prevention Service?

To find out which services you would like to be referred to, we will need to find out more information about you.

You will need to fill in a Birmingham Falls Prevention Service referral form, which will ask questions about:

- you and how you would like us to contact you in the future;
- whether you have fallen in the past;
- your current health; and
- services you would like us to give you more information about or refer you to.

How do I get a Birmingham Falls Prevention Service referral form?

You can ask us to send you a printed copy or an email copy of this form, and an extra leaflet that gives advice on how to fill it in, by posting back the Freepost envelope attached or by contacting us.

Phone: **0121 675 5171**

Email: **fallsprevention@birmingham.gov.uk**

Website: **www.birmingham.gov.uk/fallsprevention**

If you ask us to send you a printed copy of the form, we will also send you a prepaid envelope so it will not cost you anything to return it to us after filling it in.

How will you manage the information I give you?

We follow the **Data Protection Act 1998**, and we will only give your information to organisations that can help you if you sign the Fall Prevention Referral form giving us permission to do this.

What happens once I send you the form?

Once you have filled in and returned the form, we aim to contact you within seven working days.

When we receive your filled-in form, we will look at the information you have given, and then arrange support and information that matches what you have asked for.

We will pass your details, and information about how you prefer to be contacted, to relevant organisations, who will then contact you direct.

Will I have to pay for any of the services I am offered?

Some of these services will be free but, depending on your circumstances, you may have to pay for some services.

Each organisation will explain any costs you may have to pay before you decide whether to have the service.

What if I am not happy with the service?

If you have any questions about the Birmingham Falls Prevention Service or you have any difficulties with any of the services you are offered, you can contact us at any time for support.

Will you check on my progress?

Yes, we will check how you are getting on with the services and support you have been offered.

We will contact you in about three months to review how you feel about the support and information that you have received.

We will use the information you give us to help us to improve our services in the future.

More information

Birmingham Falls Prevention Service

Phone: **0121 675 5171**

Email: **fallsprevention@birmingham.gov.uk**

Website: **www.birmingham.gov.uk/fallsprevention**

Top tips to help prevent falls

Before you ask for information about the Birmingham Falls Prevention Service there are a number of things you can do right away to help prevent falls.

- Have regular eye tests and keep your glasses clean.
- Take care of your feet and wear well-fitting flat shoes that have support at the back of them.
- Keep active - take frequent walks inside or outdoors.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- Have your medication reviewed each year and whenever you notice changes in your symptoms.
- Check for trip hazards in the home, for example loose carpets, trailing wires or clutter.
- Make sure you have good lighting, especially on the stairs and in hallways.
- If you fall, tell your GP or a health professional about it.

Useful information

Age UK information leaflets

Age UK has produced a series of information leaflets that you may find useful, including the following.

- Caring for your eyes
- Healthy living (this leaflet includes information about healthy eating, foot care, sight and hearing)
- Staying steady

For copies of these leaflets, contact Age UK.

Phone: **0800 169 6565**

Email: **orders@ageuk.co.uk**

Website: **www.ageuk.org.uk/publications**

Managing your medication

If you want to review any medicines you are currently taking, please talk to your GP, nurse or local pharmacist.

Nutrition and healthy eating

The Department of Health runs a '**Change 4 Life**' campaign. This includes information about eating five portions of fruit or vegetables a day. For more information, contact the Department of Health.

Phone: **0300 123 4567**

Website: **www.nhs.uk/change4life**

The National Osteoporosis Society has produced a leaflet called '**Healthy eating for strong bones**'. For a copy, contact the National Osteoporosis Society.

Phone: **0845 130 3076**

Email: **info@nos.org.uk**

Website: **www.nos.org.uk**

Continence

The Bladder and Bowel Foundation provides information, help and support for adults aged 18 years and over who have experienced either a bladder or bowel problem, or both.

Helpline: **0870 770 3246**

Email: **info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org**

Website: **www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org**

Useful websites

Local

Birmingham Carers Centre

Birmingham Carers Centre provides support, information and advice to people who care for friends and family with disabilities.

Phone: **0121 675 8000**

Website: **www.birminghamcarerscentre.org.uk**

Community Falls Prevention Service

Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust manages this specialist service, which aims to reduce the number of elderly people who fall and reduce the severity of injuries caused by falls.

Website:
www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/falls-prevention

Firstcall for Birmingham

Firstcall for Birmingham is an advice and information service for adults aged 45 or over, and is provided by Age Concern Birmingham.

Phone: **0121 270 3311**

Website: **www.firstcallbirmingham.org.uk**

National

Age UK

Age Concern and Help the Aged are now together known as Age UK. The website provides information and advice for elderly people about benefits, care, age discrimination and computer courses.

Website: **www.ageuk.org.uk**

Disabled Living Foundation

A national charity providing independent advice on mobility aids, disability aids and daily living equipment.

Website: **www.dlf.org.uk**

National Osteoporosis Society

The only UK-wide charity dedicated to improving services to prevent, diagnose and treat osteoporosis and fractures caused by fragile bones.

Website: **www.nos.org.uk**

NHS Choices

NHS Choices is the UK's biggest health website and it gives all the information you need to make choices about your health.

Website: **www.nhs.uk**

Your right to be heard

If you have any comments, compliments or complaints about any of our services, please contact:

Customer Care and Citizen Involvement Team
Birmingham City Council
Adults and Communities
Level 6
Louisa Ryland House
44 Newhall Street
Birmingham
B3 3PL.

Phone: **0121 303 5161**

Fax: **0121 303 7208**

Email: **customercareteam@birmingham.gov.uk**

Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

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To get this leaflet in other formats

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in another language, in large print, in Braille or on audio tape, MP3 or CD, please contact us.

Phone: **0121 464 3123**

Email: **ACCommunications@birmingham.gov.uk**

Website: **www.birmingham.gov.uk/adults**

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