

People Services Scrutiny Committee – 22nd September 2015

Report of the Chief Officer Health & Wellbeing

Falls Service

Purpose of Report

This report aims to describe the magnitude of falls among older adults in Dudley and suggest mechanisms to address the problem. Also it proposes questions to scrutinise the progress of preventing falls in the short and longer terms.

1. Background

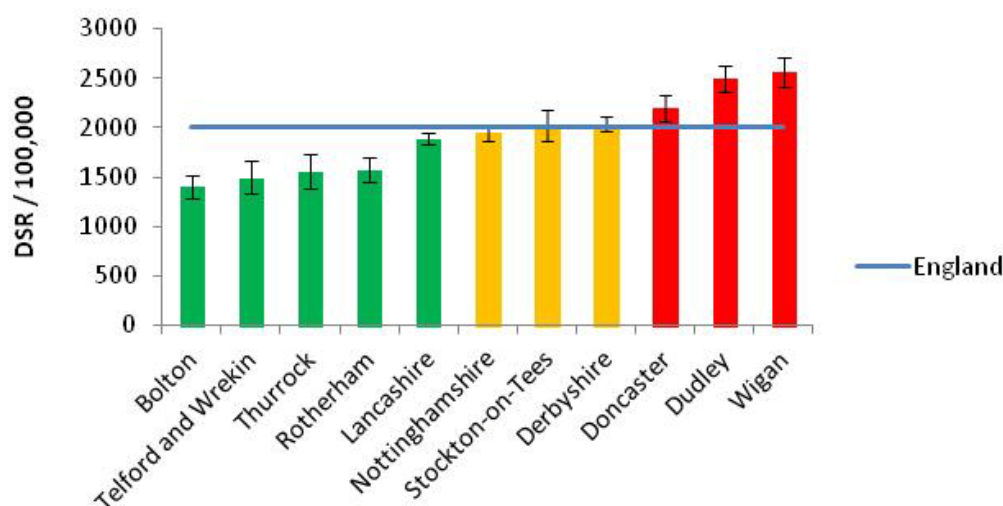
Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of death caused by injury in people aged over 75 in the UK. One-third to one-half of people aged over 65 will fall each year.

A fall can lead to considerable physical and psychological harm, resulting in a poorer quality of life. It results in longer stays in hospital, and therefore an increased cost to the health and social care systems. Falls are one of the leading reasons for admission to residential care.

2. Falls in Dudley

Falls prevention needs assessment for the population of the Dudley Borough has shown the following:

In 2012/13, Dudley had the highest rate of falls per 100,000 people aged 65 or over, compared to similar Councils, the other West Midlands Councils and to the national average



Two-thirds of all Accident and Emergency (A&E) admissions due to falls in the 65+ population occur in females. In 2013/14, 70% of admissions were female.

Two-thirds of all A&E admissions due to falls occur in the 80+ year old population. In 2013/14, 67% of admissions for falls were aged 80 or older.

A third of all deaths caused by accidental and unintentional injuries in the Borough were due to falls.

3. Dudley MBC Falls Service

The public health element of the Dudley Council Falls service was commissioned historically by PCT. Commissioning responsibilities transferred to Council with the transfer of public health in April 2013. It is delivered and co-funded by the Council's Adult Services Division.

There are a number of organisations providing falls prevention services to Dudley residents:

- Dudley Community Falls services – the main aim of which is to assess the risk of falls and develop management plans accordingly
- Osteoporosis service - delivered by Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, the aim of which is to diagnose and manage cases of bone problems, including osteoporosis
- The Public Health team commissions a number of preventative services that contribute to preventing falls. These include the Leap Over 50 programme delivered by Age Concern Dudley in the Healthy Hubs located in four parks across the Borough. The service provides gentle exercise sessions, health walks, food growing in community allotments, yoga, tai chi, cycling and walking groups.
- Age UK are a key partner within Dudley's 'Living Well Feeling Safe' programme. They provide three key services for the older population of Dudley, which include 'Staysafe', 'Leap over 50', and 'Springboard'. Staysafe provides health promotion advice, while Leap over 50 and Springboard provide ways to maintain postural stability and enable older people to get out of the house to connect with others and reduce loneliness.

4. Rationale

The falls needs assessment identified the following challenges:

- Dudley's performance on falls prevention is poor compared to both national and local average.
- There is no system wide approach to falls prevention across the Borough

- Falls services are fragmented and there is limited synergy between services provided in the community, general practice and hospital, and by the voluntary sector.

To address this problem, it is suggested that the following action is needed:

- The development of a system wide approach to falls prevention, starting from encouraging the whole population to improve their bone health from early age, through physical activity and healthy eating, to early detection of people at risk of falling and enabling them access to appropriate interventions in a timely way
- Further development of the community falls services, to ensure appropriate advice and support are given, and appropriate referrals made

5. What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee?

To support the development of a system wide approach to falls prevention, it is suggested that this approach be scrutinised by asking the following questions in the short term:

- Are we adopting an evidence based life course approach to falls prevention?
- Are all agencies working together effectively to maximise outcomes in relation to bone health and falls prevention?
- Are the right people receiving the appropriate fall reduction interventions?
- Are the pathways in place to signpost referrals into other prevention services or other appropriate services?

Question to be asked in the long term is:

- Are we seeing a reduction in falls, and in illness, disability and deaths caused by falls?

Consider resource implications.

- Do we have the necessary resources to roll out a falls awareness campaign across all age groups?
- Do we have the resources to improve the capacity of our falls prevention services to meet increased demand and be able to deliver fall risk reduction interventions in a timely manner?

Consider the role of the Council and our partners in falls prevention.

- Can we more effectively embed falls prevention as part of the Vanguard?
- How well is falls prevention embedded in the rest of the Council?

- Do the falls prevention services have effective exit routes into other services to help maintain the impact of falls service interventions and continue to prevent falls in the longer term?

Consider the development and content of a Dudley Falls and Bone Health strategy and action plan.

6. Finance

- The People Directorate expenditure on falls prevention is (£214, 660) annually; Health and Wellbeing Division funds Community Falls prevention services (£140k) and postural stabilisation service (£29,280K)
- Adult Social Care contribution is (£45,380K), distributed across transport, premises and supplies.
- The Health and Wellbeing Division currently spends £64,000 on physical activities for over 50 years old. This fund will be utilised to develop the primary prevention aspect of the system wide integrated care pathway for falls prevention.
- Dudley CCG funds osteoporosis services as part of its block contract with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

7. Law

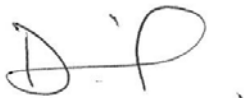
No legal implications identified

8. Equality Impact

None identified

9. Recommendations

For PLT to support the proposed developments in falls prevention and the scrutiny mechanism mentioned above



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List of Background Papers