

Age UK Somerset Falls Prevention exercise programme – Inclusion Criteria in conjunction with the Questionnaire

Age UK Somerset Strong and Steady classes

Falls Prevention is a key intervention to help keep people independent, as part of the Falls pathway. Community based classes are essential and form part of the expected referral route for all older people depending on their level of ability. Our Strong and Steady classes are provided across Somerset and North Somerset are led by qualified Falls Prevention instructors.

The classes are aimed at people aged over 65 who; are at risk of falling; may experience a fear of falling; feel unstable; have a history of falls (which has been investigated); have low bone density; a diagnosis of osteoporosis or a family history of osteoporotic fracture; and those who wish to increase muscle strength, balance and confidence. (Younger people may be suitable for the programme, evaluated upon referral)

FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

We deliver 3 levels of classes based on evidenced based programs within our Falls Prevention service; FaME and Otago. We will triage each referral and allocate them to the appropriate programme.

- The classes run once a week for an hour, in community venues and the participant will need to make their own way to the class
- These classes are progressive and equipment will be used, the minimum effective dose is 50 hours and this includes home practice and taking short walks in addition to classes. The patient will need to be made aware of this.
- Participants are encouraged to purchase their own ankle weights or resistance bands to enhance their progress at home
- The cost is £6 per class
- The classes are: Level One – Get Strong Get Steady (beginning with more seated exercises and focusing on overall strength and stamina with some balance work). Level Two – Stay Strong Stay Steady (Otago, lower limb strengthening and challenging balance exercises). Level Three – Strong and Active for Life – FaME exercises to continue the strength and balance journey including more advanced exercises and working towards backward chaining).
- Get Strong is currently not available in North Somerset and Strong and Active for Life is only available in limited locations as this is a new class that we are hoping to expand upon dependent on funding. (July 2024)

Inclusion criteria

To make sure people are at the right level participants must be able to:

- Understand and follow instructions
- Sit down and stand up independently during the class (Level 2 and above)
- Walk unaided between two sets of chairs (Level 2 and above)
- Have potential to improve both their balance and their walking
- Show a commitment to want to improve their balance and strength and become more independent
- Stand for more than 30 seconds
- Walk outside for practice (may use a walking aid)

Participants may be signposted to other, more appropriate Age UK Somerset classes if they are not suitable for our Falls Prevention programme. They will also be encouraged to progress onto more challenging classes when they have increased in ability and completed the recommend dose of 50 hours. (Level 1 & 2).

There may be other health factors which will make someone unsuitable for a Strong and Steady class, including unstable heart and circulatory conditions, severe breathlessness or dizziness and significantly impaired cognition – please check with the participant before referral.

Once the application to attend a Strong and Steady class is received the participant will be contacted direct by Age UK Somerset regarding a place with further details of day, time and venue.

If you have any queries please contact: fallsprevention@ageuksomerset.org.uk
Tel: 01823 345614