

National Falls and Fractures Prevention Strategy 2019-2024 Scottish Government

August 2019

1. Do you agree the Strategy will improve services for those who experience Falls?

Yes

If not, what improvements do you suggest?

2. Do you agree with the outcomes in the Strategy?

Yes

3. Do you have any comments or additions on topics which are not covered in the Strategy?

Age Scotland sees the whole system approach as critical to Ambition 1 and whilst hospital to community is mentioned we are unsure whether care homes are also considered as 'community'. We believe clarity on this is needed and that care homes must be included so that the recovery of older people returning to or entering a care home for the first time are supported to stay safe, and are enabled to have a good recovery.

4. Are there any key areas missing or any general amendments you would suggest?

We feel the strategy should have stronger ties with mental health services to ensure there are strong links created across health and social care to encourage falls and fractures prevention.

From our experience we have found that older people are wary of the word 'falls' and with this in mind we focus our messages on keeping independent, confident and strong. We, therefore, feel that the strategy would benefit from more positive messaging, including in the vision statement for example 'help more people remain independent and well with good social networks'. We know that Community Falls leads have been working to embed positive messaging in their practice and Age Scotland has worked

with staff in Perthshire to provide training and support for staff in care homes and the local community, delivering our 'Body Boosting Bingo' session which supports people to participate in exercise, promoting muscle strength and balance in a fun and lively way.

We felt the strategy would also benefit from highlighting the effects of sitting down, even for short periods of time, on people's general health and wellbeing, and fitness levels. Professor Dawn Skelton et al., has evidenced this negative impact in their work 'Understanding Sedentary Patterns'.

5. Please comment your thought on how best to support the implementation of the Strategy.

Age Scotland has experience in providing up to date information and advice through our free guides, helpline, and our various outreach programmes such as our Allied Health and Wellbeing consultants. We would therefore be happy to work with Public Health Scotland and NHS Inform to build on and improve the availability of information on healthy ageing, falls prevention and bone health as outlined in commitment 2.

We would also welcome the opportunity to input into the development of resources being commissioned by NHS Education for Scotland as outlined in commitment 3. Age Scotland has experience in providing workshops to businesses and employers about the effect of aging and how to prevent age discrimination.

One of Age Scotland's strategic aims to help older people to be as well as they can be, which is directly aligned to outcome 4 in the strategy. Our services such as good day calls, community connecting, care and repair Edinburgh, and our helpline can all help to achieve this outcome.

Care and Repair Edinburgh, and other Care and Repairs across Scotland, provide a wide range of practical services that help older people live in their own homes independently and provide services. This includes a handyperson service and small repairs which can assist with commitment 6. Care and Repair Edinburgh could, for example, play a wider role in highlighting equipment needs, adaptations and signposting working with Integration Authorities and other key stakeholders. It is also worth considering how the Scottish Fire and Rescue service can help to support the strategy through their home safety checks.

In order to achieve outcome 5 which will aim to see more people taking measures to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing and avoid harm from falls we believe education is key. Our 'Planning for your Future' workshops centre around health and wellbeing and focuses on keeping active and sitting less, the importance of good

nutrition and footcare which can help to inform people how to best avoid harm from falls and improve their health and wellbeing. Planning for retirement is also a key transition point in people's lives which is why our workshops on 'Planning for your Future' are an opportunity to share key health and wellbeing messages with people who may be open to making changes that can impact their future wellbeing.

Age Scotland's AHP Health and Wellbeing Consultants are well placed to bring a unique perspective from the people we work with and would welcome the opportunity to help with the implementation of Commitment 12 which will see the creation of national guidance on the 'falls conversation'.

6. Do you have any further general comments on the Falls and Fragility Fracture Prevention Scotland Strategy?

Age Scotland welcome the contents of the Falls and Fragility Fracture Prevention Strategy and see it as an invaluable way to build on the good work that has been achieved to date across Scotland.

We see Ambition 2 'Build resilience at population level' as key to falls prevention and keeping people fit and strong. Age Scotland believes that continued investment in initiatives that will improve people's general fitness levels, strength and balance is important to realising this ambition and outcomes. For example exercises such as tai chi, showing people how to move about on the floor and how to get up from the floor if they have had a fall will help realise this ambition and we feel these opportunities should be provided and practiced earlier in life before a person is at risk of a fall. Such good practice which enables a resilient population can be a challenge when funding is reduced or removed and we would like to see the strategy ensure that there is continuity and equality of access to these services.

Want to find out more?

As Scotland's national charity supporting people over the age of 50, Age Scotland works to improve older people's lives and promote their rights and interests. We aim to help people love later life, whatever their circumstances. We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older.

Our Policy, Communications and Campaigns team research, analyse and comment on a wide range of public policy issues affecting older people in Scotland.

Our work is guided by the views and needs of older people themselves.

Further information

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