

A Community Approach to Falls Prevention - Update

This two year programme is funded by NHS Stoke on Trent and delivered by June Brammar, the Beth Johnson Foundation Health Improvement Co-ordinator in partnership with Annette Twemlow, Senior Osteoporosis Nurse Specialist, based at the Haywood Hospital in Burslem, Stoke on Trent. The project, launched in September 2008 initially offered 100 places. The response to the promotion of this programme was overwhelming. By early October all places were filled, with a further 73 people placed on a waiting list. At the present time, February 2009, the number of people awaiting a place has risen considerably, to the extent that further funding has been made available to deliver additional programmes.

So why is this programme so popular? Piloted in 2004, the risk assessment tool is simple but effective, can be used by health professions as a first line of prevention and by members of the community for use as a self assessment tool within their own neighbourhood settings.



The programme

The training which takes place over two full days is accredited at level two with the Open College Network. On completion of the programme learners will be able to:

- **Recognise the benefits of preventing falls** for the individual and the NHS, in particular investigating the wider implications of a fall that may occur for the individual.
- **Use a risk assessment tool**, which was specifically designed and successfully piloted for this project, has passed through the Primary Care Trust Clinical Governance Board and is now used as a standard tool within the Stoke on Trent Falls Prevention Strategy.
- **Understand the changes that take place as we age** – what is ‘normal’ and how the ageing process can produce a susceptibility to falling.
- **Understand the issues surrounding osteoporosis and fractures** – How osteoporosis may lead to fractures and ways of preventing it through a life course approach.
- **Understand the issues arising from working with individuals from different backgrounds.** How we can identify and overcome potential barriers.

Support

Learners are further supported on completion of the programme by the project co-ordinator and are automatically invited to play an integral part within the Stoke on Trent Falls Prevention Strategy, working in partnership with a wide range of health professionals and specific voluntary sector organisations.

Four training programmes have now taken place between November 2008 and February 2009, training a total of 43 people from a variety of organisations, agencies and community based settings.

Feedback from all programmes has been extremely positive. Comments include:

“I now feel confident that I can complete a risk assessment form for falls prevention. I know how to look at preventative methods and how to refer into services”

“I know more about where to access information and support for people who are identified at risk of falls”



“Have suggested that all my staff attend the training”

“Really pleased that I was given the opportunity to attend the training”

“This course has increased my awareness of falls prevention and highlighted issues that I can feed back to my colleagues and service users”

If you would like more information on this new innovative training programme please contact June Brammar on 01782 844036 or email junebrammar@bjf.org.uk