

Steady On ... Stay SAFE

Falls Prevention Campaign Briefing



Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing. The risk of falling can be reduced



Thanks for agreeing to take part in the **Steady On ... Stay SAFE** falls prevention campaign. Between 230,000 and 460,000 people over the age of 60 fall in Wales each year¹. Many of these suffer serious injury, which can have a drastic impact on their quality of life, impacting their confidence and independence.

However, falls are not an inevitable side-effect of getting older, and can be prevented. **Steady On ... Stay SAFE** is an awareness campaign to help people be more aware of how they can best take care of themselves, their friends and family, and reduce the number of falls suffered by older people.

This briefing will help you use the resources that are included in this pack so that, working together, we can support older people to live healthier and happier lives.

About the campaign

Steady On ... Stay SAFE focuses on three key messages to help people reduce their risk of falls:

1. Stay active and stay strong

Keeping active helps to maintain your strength and balance, and can significantly reduce your risk of falling. **Keeping active doesn't have to involve going to a gym or a leisure centre – try and find something you enjoy doing. Whether it be walking the dog, swimming, Tai-Chi or dancing, staying active will help reduce your risk of falling.**

Advice on exercise can be found on the NHS choices website², including detailed and simple exercises to help you improve your strength³, balance⁴ and flexibility⁵, and chair-based exercises⁶.

Good advice on exercise and falls prevention is also available from the CSP (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)⁷ and Age Cymru⁸.

In addition, if you suffer from, or are at risk of a chronic disease, you can ask your GP to refer you to a suitable exercise class via the NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme)⁹ programme. Age Cymru produce a self-assessment form to help you determine useful activities you can take to reduce your risk of falling¹⁰. Check with your local leisure centre to see if they have classes available to help prevent your risk of falling.

2. If you fall, tell someone

A history of falls is a warning sign that something is wrong. It is also a sign that you might be at an increased risk of falling in the future.

However, this doesn't need to be the case. With the right support and treatment, you can reduce your chance of falling. If you have fallen, it's important to tell people so that you can get the help you need.

If you have experienced a fall, you should let someone know. This could be your GP, local pharmacist, optician, or family and friends. **It is highly likely that the risk of falling again can be significantly reduced, but only if people know to help.**

3. Watch your step – be aware of trip hazards

Many falls happen because of trips and slips in the home or on the street. Clearing clutter in the home and being aware of trip hazards can make a massive difference. Some great practical advice on this is available from Age Cymru¹⁰ and Care & Repair¹¹. Care & Repair provide free home adaptations and advice to older people, helping you to stay independent, in your own home, and reduce your risk of falling¹².

It's really important to make sure to have your eyesight checked regularly, wear sensible and stable footwear, and keep halls and stairs well lit.

You can also contact your local Council if you see trip hazards on the streets where you live, such as uneven paving.

How should I use the Steady On ... Stay SAFE postcards?

Included in this pack are a number of postcards to raise awareness of the key campaign messages detailed above. The cards are bilingual, and contain a blank space in the bottom right of the front of the card. This blank space allows you to place a sticker which can signpost people to relevant local information, such as contact details of your own service. Standard LL40 labels will fit the blank space.

Who are the cards for?

- Older people who may be at risk of falling
- People who work with older people
- Members of the public, in order to raise awareness in order to help their friends, family and neighbours.

You can use the cards as an opportunity to talk to people about the issue of falls. Please encourage people to share the information about the campaign with their friends, family and work colleagues.

What supporting materials are available?

The postcards refer people to the Ageing Well in Wales website, which has a dedicated **Falls Prevention resource hub**¹³. The resource hub contains useful tools and guidance for older people and for professionals.

There is a poster supporting the campaign which you can print out on either A3 or A4 paper¹⁵. Like the postcards, the poster contains a blank space to give details of your own service.

We have also produced an A4 leaflet, **8 Myths About Falls**¹⁴, which can be downloaded from our website and used to challenge the misconception that falls are an inevitable part of getting older.

Included in this campaign pack is a useful contact list to help you signpost people who may need help. It includes how to contact:

- **Care & Repair** - for housing adaptations. Your local care and repair office can be contacted by calling **0300 111 3333**
- The relevant local authority department for reporting falls hazards outside the home (*see included contact sheet*)
- Your local Older People's Strategy Coordinator, who works for the Council and supports older people (*see included contact sheet*)
- NHS Direct Wales for health concerns, who can be contacted on **0845 46 47**.
- The Age Cymru Advice line provides free, impartial and confidential support to older people, and can be reached on **08000 223 444** (*you can also order physical copies of Age Cymru booklets and guides via this line*).

Please add to this by also informing people about other useful local services and schemes that you are aware of.

Contact Ageing Well in Wales

For more information about the campaign, to order additional materials or to discuss the campaign further, please contact Ageing Well in Wales at ageingwell@olderpeoplewales.com or on **02920 445 030**.

References

1. **Ageing Well in Wales 2014-2019:**
<http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/Libraries/Documents/AWFinalEnglish.pdf>
2. **NHS choices:** <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/fitness/Pages/Fitnesshome.aspx>
3. **NHS Choices – Strength exercises for older people:**
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/NHS_strength_exercise.pdf
4. **NHS Choices – Balance exercises for older people:**
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/NHS_balance_exercise.pdf
5. **NHS Choices – Flexibility exercises for older people:**
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/NHS_flexibility_exercise.pdf
6. **NHS Choices – Sitting exercises for older people:**
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/NHS_sitting_exercise.pdf
7. **Get Up and Go – a guide to Staying Steady (CSP):**
<http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/get-go-guide-staying-steady>
8. **Staying Steady – Keep active and reduce your risk of falling (Age Cymru):**
<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Global/Age-Cymru/Factsheets%20and%20information%20guides/IG14.pdf?dtrk=true>
9. **NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme):** <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/ners>
10. **Avoiding slips, trips and falls (Age Cymru):**
<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Global/Age-Cymru/Factsheets%20and%20information%20guides/Age%20Cymru%20-%20Avoiding%20slips,%20trips%20and%20falls%20leaflet%20-%20English.pdf>
11. **Top tips on preventing trips, slips & falls (Care & Repair):**
<http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/Libraries/Documents/Top-Falls-Tips.pdf>
12. **Care & Repair Cymru:** <http://www.careandrepair.org.uk/>
13. **Ageing Well in Wales Falls Prevention Resource Hub:**
www.ageingwellinwales.com/falls
14. **8 Myths About Falls:** <http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/Libraries/Documents/8-Myths-About-Falls-eng.pdf>
15. **Steady On ... Stay SAFE poster:**
<http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/Libraries/Documents/Steady-On-Poster.pdf>

About the Steady On ... Stay SAFE Campaign

The Steady On ... Stay Safe Falls Prevention campaign has been produced by Public Health Wales as part of the Ageing Well in Wales programme. The following organisations have been instrumental in developing and supporting the campaign:

- 1,000 Lives Improvement Service
- Aberystwyth University
- Age Cymru
- CADR (Centre for Ageing & Dementia Research)
- Cardiff & Vale University Health Board
- Care & Repair Cymru
- CSP (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)
- Hywel Dda Local Health Board
- NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme)
- Newport City Council
- RNIB
- WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association)
- Welsh Government

About Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales. We work locally, nationally and internationally, with our partners and communities in the following areas:

- Health improvement
- Health intelligence
- Health protection
- Microbiology
- NHS quality improvement and patient safety
- Primary, community and integrated care
- Safeguarding
- Screening

About Ageing Well in Wales

Ageing Well in Wales is a national Programme hosted by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. It brings together individuals and communities with public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and promote innovative and practical ways to make Wales a good place to grow older for everyone.

The Ageing Well Programme is actively supported by Welsh Government and key national organisations. It has a rapidly growing network of members encompassing diverse organisations and interests across Wales, the UK, and internationally.

For more information, email ageingwell@olderpeoplewales.com or refer to our website, www.ageingwellinwales.com.