

Media Release



To: Local
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Release: Limber Up to Reduce Falls

LIMBER UP TO REDUCE FALLS

GP's in the Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness area are being asked to pass elderly patients fit for a new exercise programme designed to reduce falls. Those in sheltered housing complexes who wish to limber up will be put through their paces on the Otago programme by carers.

They have been trained using £4,000 which was awarded to a Falls Management Programme as prize money in a national competition. The programme is a joint exercise between NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Council.

Otago is a home exercise scheme designed especially to reduce falls and injuries. It comprises a set of muscle strengthening and balance retraining exercises, and includes a walking plan. Doctors will be asked if patients who want to join the sessions are able to take part on medical grounds.

People will be encouraged not only to participate three times a week in the strengthening and balance part of the programme but to walk on other days – either outside, or within the complex using a walking aid. Their progress will be regularly monitored and their walking ability checked over distance, time and steps.

NHS Forth Valley Senior Physiotherapist Jean Nelson said: “If patient confidence levels increase, we can help reduce injuries such as hip fractures which are a major problem for older people. The emotional cost of a broken hip can be enormous, robbing people of their independence. Some are no longer able to do the simple tasks such as collecting their pension from the post office.”

The next stage of the project which is due to begin soon, is to train more carers in the sheltered housing complexes. And this autumn a major training event is being held which will involve professionals from various agencies.

Councillor Gerry Goldie, Falkirk Council's spokesperson for Older People said: “I welcome this programme as not only a means of helping to prevent falls among older people but as another way that Falkirk Council staff can provide a therapeutic exercise programme for people to help maintain high levels of independence.”

The scheme has already attracted interest from private nursing homes and a national housing association.

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Notes to Editors

For further information, please contact Communications Department on 01786 457243

Forth Valley NHS Board
Carview House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4SW,
Telephone 01786 463031 Fax 01786 470984
E-mail yourhealthservice@fvhb.scot.nhs.uk
www.nhsforthvalley.com