



STAYING STEADY

**PERFORMANCE REPORT
2024 -2025**



Falls in the North East

Falls and fractures in older people are a significant and often preventable health issue. Reducing the incidence of falls and fractures is crucial for maintaining the health, well-being, and independence of older adults. These events can have profound emotional, physical, and financial consequences for individuals and society as a whole.

A fall is generally defined as an event that causes a person to unintentionally come to rest on the ground or a lower level, not resulting from a major intrinsic event (such as a stroke) or overwhelming hazard. While falls can happen at any age, older people, particularly those aged 65 and over, are at the highest risk. It is estimated that approximately a third of individuals aged 65 and over, and about half of those aged 80 and over, will experience at least one fall annually. For these individuals, falling often leads to distress, injury, loss of confidence, reduced independence, and in severe cases, mortality.

In the UK, falls and fractures represent a serious health concern. In 2023, the National Health Service (NHS) recorded around 255,000 fall-related emergency hospital admissions for patients aged 65 and over. The total cost of fragility fractures, including hospital care and social services, is estimated at approximately £4.4 billion annually. Of this, a significant portion around 25% is attributed to social care, placing considerable strain on both healthcare systems and social services.

Focusing specifically on the North-East and North Cumbria, a report commissioned by the Academic Health Science Network for the region (AHSN NENC) highlighted the severe impact of falls. Between 2014 and 2015, the region saw 12,654 fall-related hospital admissions, costing an estimated £84.97 million to the NHS. Alarmingly, around a third of individuals aged 65 and over in the North-East experience falls each year, with approximately 5% of these resulting in fractures that require hospital treatment.

The impact of falls on individuals and communities reinforces the need for comprehensive fall management programs to ensure older adults can live independently, safely, and with confidence.

References used:

- Government of the United Kingdom, 2024. Falls: Applying All Our Health. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/falls-applying-all-our-health>
- National Audit of Inpatient Falls, 2023. National Audit of Inpatient Falls Report. Available at: <https://fffap.org.uk/fffap/naifrep.nsf/>
- Fragility Fracture Network (FFFAP), 2023. National Audit of Inpatient Falls (NAIF) Report. Available at: <https://fffap.org.uk>



About us

Healthworks is an award-winning charity that works with people of all ages to enable them to lead a longer, happier, and healthier life. From the antenatal period onwards, we offer a range of services that help and support people to; reduce the risk of preventable ill-health, become more active, eat more healthily, give up smoking, improve mobility, reduce the risk of a fall, improve mental wellbeing, have a healthier lifestyle and manage existing medical conditions.

Our objective is to preserve, protect, and improve the health and life outcomes across the North East region of England.

Background

Staying Steady is an evidenced-based community-delivered falls prevention programme in the North-East of England, adapted from the Falls Management Exercise (FaME) intervention. Currently, Staying Steady consists of one-hour group-based sessions delivered once per week over 27 weeks. To help participants meet the 50 hours of exercise recommended to reduce fall risk, group-based sessions are supplemented with home exercises to be completed two to three times per week, for a maximum of 30 to 40 min per session.

Participants registered at a Newcastle upon Tyne GP can be referred based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Feel unstable and unbalanced
- Fear of falling
- History of falls
- Low bone density and/or family history of osteoporotic fracture

Participants needed to be able to mobilise independently with or without the use of a walking aid and have the cognitive ability to follow instructions. Staying Steady practitioners used the Falls Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT), functional ability, and medical history records to confirm the participants' suitability.

Outcome measures are assessed at baseline and 27 weeks which include; Patient-reported outcome measures (adapted from the Patient Reported Outcome Measures in England Data Dictionary version), Timed up and go test (TUG), Four-stage balance test (4SBT), 30-s chair stand (CS) test. Goal-setting and evaluation questionnaires are developed in-house.

Summary of Activities

Over the course of 2024/25, the Staying Steady programme has continued to provide essential support in improving balance, strength, and confidence, helping to reduce the risk of falls. This year has been marked by key achievements, reflecting both progress and areas for further development in the coming year.

The delivery of sessions saw a 2.3% increase, creating greater accessibility, and consistency, despite the challenges posed by public holidays and scheduling constraints. While sessions ran at an average of 47% capacity, there remains scope for improvement in participant adherence and engagement, which will be a focus for 2025/26.

A significant milestone this year has been the increase in referrals, particularly from the Community Rehabilitation and Reablement Team (CRRT), rising from 12 to 26. Self-referrals also increased from 88 to 112, demonstrating greater public awareness and confidence in the programme's benefits.

Investing in the expertise of our team remains a priority. This year, one instructor successfully completed their Postural Stability Instructor (PSI) training, while another is currently enrolled, making sure service continues to be delivered to the highest standard.

Despite a slight reduction in the number of cohorts and participants, there has been a notable increase in completion rates from 50% to 57%, highlighting improved retention and engagement. The efficiency of participant progression through the programme remains an area for review. The median wait time for the initial assessment increased from 15.33 days to 22.34 days, while the median overall wait time remained stable at around 40 days. The longest wait time saw a slight increase, from 80.8 to 82 days, while the shortest wait rose from 6.53 to 8.38 days. Encouragingly, average session attendance improved from 7.67 to 8.07 participants per session, indicating stronger participant engagement once enrolled.

Looking ahead, several key areas have been identified for improvement:

- Addressing the 47% session capacity by implementing strategies to encourage greater consistency in attendance.
- Streamlining the assessment and referral process to improve accessibility and ensure timely intervention.
- Expanding training opportunities for staff to enhance service quality and maintain best practice.

The achievements of 2024/25 provide a strong foundation upon which to build. With a continued focus on participant engagement, operational efficiency, and staff development, the Staying Steady programme is well-positioned to further its impact in the coming year.

Logic Model for Healthworks Staying Steady Service



INPUTS

Funding:
£71,557 annual contract value.

Personnel:

- Physiotherapists (for education and assessment)
- Community exercise instructors
- Administrative support staff

Facilities & Equipment:

- Exercise venues in community locations
- Equipment for fall prevention exercises

Policies & Regulations:

- Compliance with NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB policies
- NHS England service conditions (safeguarding, governance, etc.)

Governance & Oversight:

- Provider representatives
- Contract management by NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB

Information Systems:

- Patient data collection and reporting mechanism
- Quarterly service quality reports
- Complaints monitoring system



ACTIVITIES

Key actions undertaken to deliver the service:

Exercise Programs:

- 28-week evidence-based fall prevention program
- 4 blocks of 9 weeks
- 24 community-based exercise sessions per participant
- Additional home-based exercises

Educational Sessions:

- 2 physiotherapist-led educational sessions
- 2 assessment sessions to track progress

Service Capacity & Access:

- 128 places available per week across different locations
- Annual capacity of 230 individuals completing the program

Monitoring & Reporting:

- Quarterly reports on patient safety, quality, and activity levels
- Service evaluations through patient satisfaction questionnaires
- Complaint monitoring and resolution



OUTPUTS

Measurable deliverables from program implementation:

Participation & Completion:

- 230 individuals enrolled annually
- 24 in-person exercise sessions per participant
- 4 educational/assessment sessions per participant

Service Quality Indicators:

- 80% patient satisfaction target met
- 80% of participants reporting positive health outcomes

Operational Performance:

- Compliance with NHS governance and service standards
- Timely submission of financial, safety, and activity reports

Community Reach & Impact:

- Accessibility across multiple community locations
- Enhanced awareness of fall prevention strategies



OUTCOMES

Expected changes and benefits for participants and the healthcare system:

Short-Term Outcomes (3-6 months)

- Improved strength, balance, and coordination in participants
- Increased confidence in mobility and reduced fear of falling
- Greater knowledge about fall prevention and safety at home
- Enhanced patient engagement and self-care practices

Medium-Term Outcomes (6-12 months)

- Reduction in fall-related hospital admissions
- Fewer emergency department visits due to falls
- Increased independence among older adults
- Improved quality of life and mental well-being



IMPACT

Wider societal and systemic effects of the Staying Steady Falls Service:

Healthcare System Efficiency:

- Decreased burden on emergency and long-term care services
- Cost savings from fall-related injury prevention

Community Health Improvement:

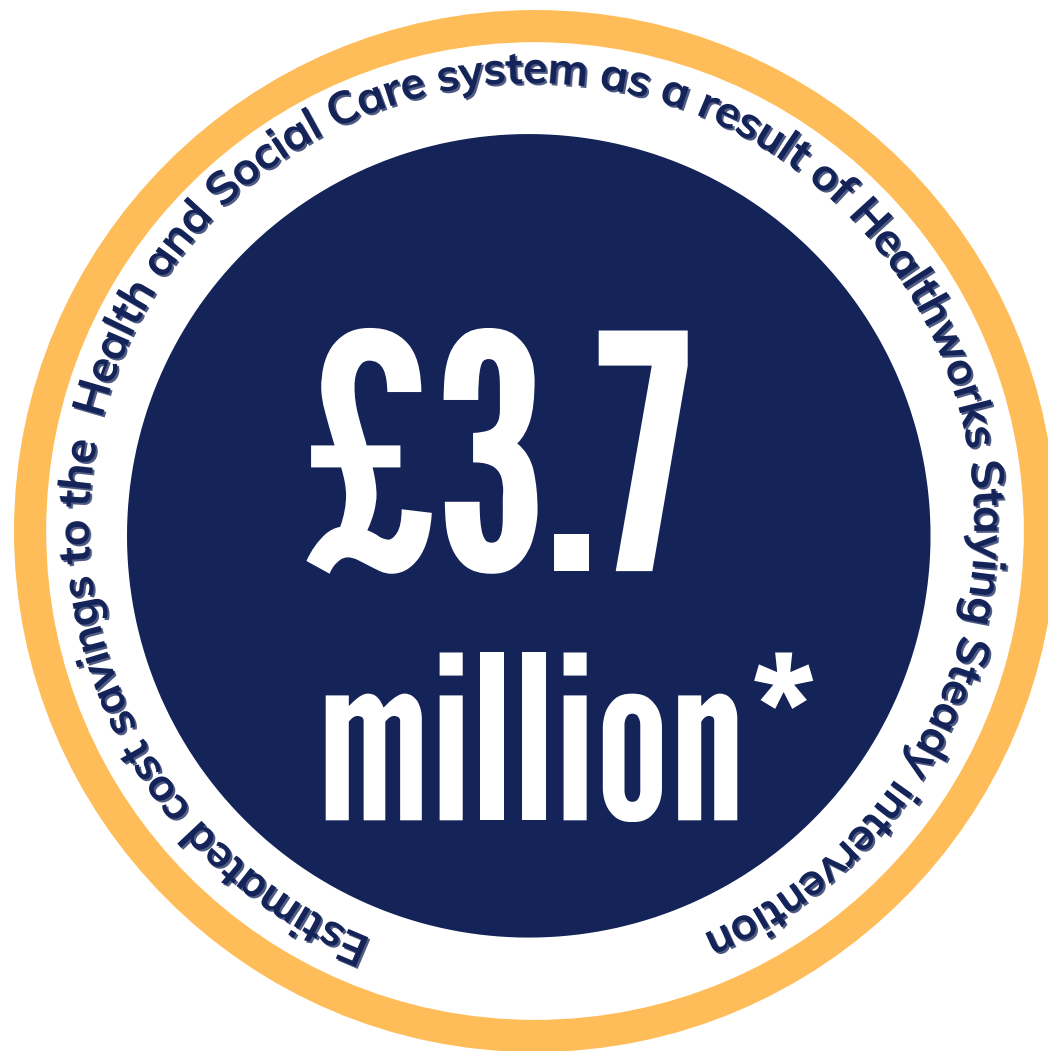
- Aging population maintains better mobility and independence
- Reduced social isolation through community exercise engagement

Policy & Service Enhancements:

- Evidence supporting continued funding and expansion of fall prevention programs
- Integration of fall prevention strategies into broader community health initiatives

**Estimated cost
savings to the
Health and Social
Care system as a
result of
Healthworks
Staying Steady
intervention
2024-25**

**Estimated cost savings calculated using the 2023/24 National Cost Collection data (the national schedules of NHS costs and the National Cost Collection Index (NCCI)*



**Averted the human
and financial cost of
a serious hip fracture
and replacement**

£2.1m*

**Averted the human
and financial cost of
a broken femur or
wrist**

£1.5m*

**Reduced risk of
depression and low
mood**

£16k*

Overview

Staying Steady is a 28 week specialist physical activity programme for people who have recently fallen or are afraid they might fall. Sessions are delivered in 4 community venues across the city (Byker, Gosforth, Benwell and Lemington)

Programme aims

A reduction of falls in older people via:

- improved balance and strength,
- increased confidence,
- increased social engagement,
- improved health literacy;
- all contributing to physical and mental wellbeing.

“Falls among older adults in the UK impose a substantial financial burden on the healthcare system.

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the cost of falls to the NHS is over £2.3 billion annually, which equates to more than £6 million per day.

The total cost of fragility fractures in the UK is estimated to be £4.4 billion, including £1.1 billion for social care”

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). (2025). Falls and Fracture Prevention. Retrieved from [Fenton, K. \(2014\). The human cost of falls. UK Health Security Agency.](#)

How much have we done?

346

referrals received

192

patients started exercising

394

sessions delivered

13

new cohorts were initiated

13

cohorts were completed

57%

patients completed

2,992

attendances

264

signposting's made

62

onward referrals made

42

waiting to start

as of 3rd April '25

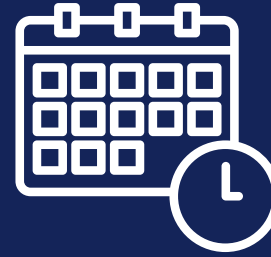


Healthworks
the community health charity

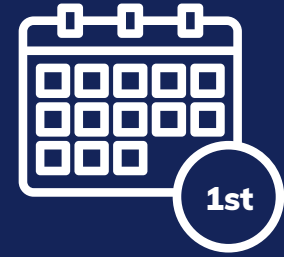
How well have we done it?



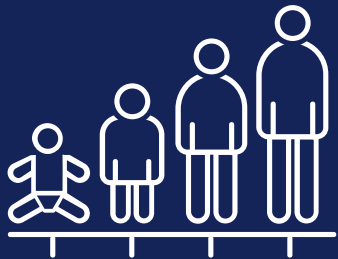
1.9 days average time
from referral received to
initial contact



40.02 days median average
time from receiving referral
to client starting exercising



22.3 days median average
time from receiving referral
to first available assessment



average age of
participants of 78 years



90% of participants were
aged over 65 years



68% of participants were
Female. 32% Male



38% reside in areas
<30% IMD



30% of participants
classed themselves as
ethnic diverse



27% of participants class
themselves as disabled



Average attendance of
76%



2992 combined group
exercise hours delivered



Healthworks
the community health charity

What are our results?



1.13 average improvement
in 4 point balance test



92% of completers
improvement in TUG
Functional test by 40%(avg.)



71% of completers
improvement in Sit to Stand
Functional test by 41%(avg.)



92% of participants found
the education sessions
useful



98% plan to continue to
exercise at home or in
community venues



55% participants fully
achieved their goals and
44% Partially achieved



94% of participants found
the level of exercise just
right



98% of participants
would recommend the
programme



96% of participants felt
they benefited from the
programme

As of the 2021 Census, there were over 11 million people aged 65 years and over in England and Wales, accounting for 18.6% of the total population. This represents an increase from 16.4% in 2011. ons.gov.uk

By 2041, the number of individuals aged 65 and over in the UK is projected to reach 20.4 million, making up 26% of the total population. ons.gov.uk

Frailty is a common condition among older adults, characterised by increased vulnerability to adverse health outcomes. In England, approximately 3% of those aged 65 and over are living with severe frailty, 12% with moderate frailty, and 35% with mild frailty.

Feedback and Evaluation

Participants who completed were requested to offer feedback for evaluation purposes, contributing valuable qualitative data to enrich the analysis and insights

“The sessions were gentle and encouraging and helped me to regain my self-confidence, both along and within a group of people. Thank you very much.”

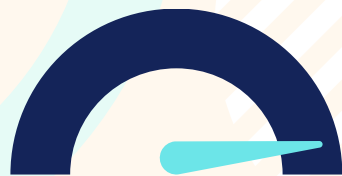
“The Instructor was encouraging so I now believe that exercising will help me achieve the best I can. An excellent course - thank you.”

“This course has been invaluable to me. I am more confident, have a greater range of mobility, balance and strength.”

“The Education session had a good range of advice, personalised when required. Very useful and informative”

A 12-month follow-up was conducted post-intervention completion to evaluate the long-term impact, pinpoint any persistent challenges or support requirements, and leverage these findings to optimise the efficacy of future interventions. The return rate of the evaluation questionnaire was 60%.

Have you noticed any improvements in your lifestyle?



94% responded 'Yes'

Have you continued to follow your homework?



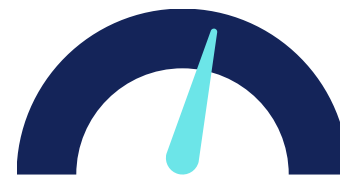
72% responded 'Yes'

Have you joined any classes or activities in your local area?



88% responded 'Yes'

Are you still in contact with any of the other people you met at the class?



57% responded 'Yes'

Potential Savings and Benefits 2024/25

We estimated that several costs, savings, and benefits could be derived using the 2023/24 National Cost Collection data (the national schedules of NHS costs and the National Cost Collection Index (NCCI).

Likely savings as a result of Staying Steady

110 of the 192 at risk of falling and serious injury averted the human and financial cost of a serious hip fracture and replacement

Ambulance (See & Convey)	£268.39 per incident
A and E	£450 per visit
Serious hip	£17,385
Inpatient cost	£1,014
Rehab	£495.71
Total	£19,613.10
	x110 = £2,157,441

75% of the 110 averted the human and financial cost of a broken femur or wrist

Since there is a small level of uncertainty about the actual health status of participants and their likely risk of falling before they join a class, we took a conservative approach.

Fractured femur	£15,960.26 x 83
Fractured wrist	£2,350.47 x 83
Sub Totals	£1,324,701.58 + £195,089.01
Total	£1,519,790.59

65% of completers reduced risk of depression and low mood and improved confidence (proxy PROMs)

Assessment of mental health (low risk) costs £226.27 x 71 = **£16,065.17** (excludes drug treatment and GP consultations)

Overall total and savings

£3,693,296.76

NHS North East & North Cumbria ICB funds of **£71,557** are provided to fund Staying Steady. The potential savings in terms of overall primary and secondary care expenditure that would otherwise have been spent without this investment is **£3,693,296.76**

The return that is achieved for every £1 of NHS money spent is £49.65. [1:50]

If we add in the costs of social care that at least a proportion of the older people would have received as a result of being unable to care for themselves, the costs rise appreciably and the wider costs to family and so on increase the figures more.

Reuben Journey to Stability

At 72 years old and living in an area ranked among the most deprived in the country (IMD 2), he faced significant mobility challenges. Referred by his physiotherapist due to balance issues caused by peripheral neuropathy, he had experienced frequent falls and relied on a walking stick indoors and a mobility scooter outside. Unsure of what to expect but open to trying anything, he joined the Staying Steady programme to improve his strength and independence.

Despite starting in week eight and missing sessions due to ill health, he attended 65% of the programme and practiced exercises at home. Over time, his mobility and confidence improved significantly:

- Timed Up & Go: Improved from 17 seconds (using a stick) to 13 seconds (without).
- 30-Second Sit to Stand: Increased from 4 to 7 repetitions.
- Four-Point Balance: Remained at level 1, but he felt steadier.
- Fear of Falling: Shifted from restricting activities to feeling cautious but confident.

He now moves around his home without a walking stick or relying on furniture for support. Tasks like getting to the toilet, picking up items, and getting up from the floor are much easier. He has also learned to manage his balance through small postural adjustments rather than waving his arms for stability.

Committed to maintaining his progress, he continues daily exercises at home and plans to explore local fitness classes. His journey highlights the effectiveness of Staying Steady in restoring confidence, mobility, and independence.



“I found the programme enormously beneficial. I’ve stopped using my stick indoors and don’t need to hold onto furniture anymore. I was unsure at first, but the exercises made a real difference. I can get out of bed and move around more easily, it has changed my life.”

Regaining Independence After Surgery



After undergoing cancer surgery in April 2022, a 73-year-old man from NE3 found his world had dramatically changed. Once an avid walker covering 10 to 15 miles at a time, he was suddenly faced with severe pain, weakness, and a loss of confidence after a fall. Bursitis in his hip and a hairline pelvic fracture only added to his discomfort. Though determined to keep up with his physiotherapy and rebuild his strength, he admitted feeling unsafe walking and uncertain about the future.

He was referred to the Staying Steady programme by TIMS, and though initially unsure of what to expect, he quickly embraced the opportunity to improve. As the weeks passed, he noticed meaningful changes. Walking became easier, and his confidence slowly returned. What once seemed impossible like getting down to the floor and back up became achievable. He felt safer, stronger, and more independent.

The structured sessions and supportive environment gave him both routine and motivation. He attended 22 out of 26 sessions, an impressive 85% attendance rate. His progress was reflected not just in how he felt but in measurable outcomes:

- His Timed Up and Go improved from 21 seconds to 14 seconds.
- His 30-second Sit to Stand increased from 5 to 10 repetitions.
- His confidence while walking outside grew from feeling nervous to feeling completely at ease.
- His fear of falling lessened no longer something that restricted him.

Now able to walk 4–5 miles on flat ground with the help of a frame, he's also feeling more capable with daily tasks. He has plans to continue attending Keep Moving sessions at the Lemington Centre and remains motivated to keep exercising at home.

"Staying Steady helped me notice real improvements in my mobility. I was surprised I could get down to the floor and back up, it made me feel safer. The course gave me confidence, and your support was excellent."





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