Facts about falls

1. About one-third of people over 65 will fall in a year, rising to approximately half of all those aged 80 and over.¹

2. Seventy-five per cent of falls are not reported.²

3. Falls destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence, with 9 per cent of older people who fall becoming afraid to leave their homes in case they fall again.³

4. Falls represent over half of hospital admissions for accidental injury.⁴

5. Every year in England, more than 223,000 people over 60 have a fracture as a result of a fall. This is more than the entire population of Northampton.⁵

6. Each year, fractures in patients aged 60 years and over account for more than 1.5 million hospital bed days in the UK.⁶

7. Ten per cent of hip-fracture patients will die within one month of their fracture, 30 per cent will die within a year and there are 13,800 hip-fracture-related deaths a year in the UK.⁷

8. The annual cost of falls of people over 60 in England is £2 billion a year, or more than £5.6 million a day.⁸

9. A tailored exercise programme can reduce an individual’s risk of falling by up to 50 per cent.⁹

10. It has been estimated that as much as 30 per cent of visual impairment in people over 75 is the result of wearing the wrong glasses or no glasses at all¹⁰, which can affect a person’s balance and co-ordination.

² ibid
⁵ Age UK and Department of Health calculation combined health and social care based on 2010 Department of Health and Personal Social Services Research Unit figures (unpublished) and 2011 census
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⁹ D. A. Skelton et al. (2004a) FoME (Falls Management Exercise): RCT on the effects of a nine-month group exercise programme in Frequently falling community dwelling women aged 65 and over’, Journal of Aging and Physical Activity, 12(3): 457–458

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