

Ageing Well

Falls and Mobility

Revised: 30/08/2017

Introduction

[Falls](#) are a major cause of disability and are the leading cause of mortality (as a result of an injury) in people aged 75 years and over in the UK . It is estimated that 35% of people aged over 65 will experience one or more fall on an annual basis and the percentage will increase with age. It is estimated that 45% of those aged 85 and living in the community will fall each year. Hip fractures are the most frequent fragility fracture caused by a fall and the most common cause of accident related death. It is estimated that the number of those aged 85 and over is set to increase two fold between 2010 and 2030 (Government Actuary Department).

Three main causes of falls include: chronic health conditions; impairments; and conditions that affect balance. Accidental falls and slips are also common with a range of household related health and safety issues being the cause for both men and women. Falls can lead to loss of confidence and social isolation.

The prevention of falls and the increase of mobility is key to reducing morbidity and mortality from falls (NHS Confederation), and effective [falls prevention schemes](#) are a key recommendation for implementation that will have a direct impact on hospital admissions. This provides an opportunity for health and social care services to integrate provision around the service users.

Falls are the number one precipitating factor for a person losing independence and going into long term care.

Falls Prevention has been included as a priority within the updated [West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). Action will be taken to maximise independence in older people by: preventing falls; reducing preventable hospital admissions due to falls; and improving rehabilitation services.

Source:

What do we know?

It is estimated that that 4,911 people aged 65 and over in West Berkshire are unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own (for example; going outdoors and walking down the road, getting up and down the stairs, getting around the house on the level, getting to the toilet and getting out of bed. This figure is predicted to rise

to 7,493 by 2030 (Projecting Older People Population Information System). In West Berkshire, 7,292 people aged 65 and over were predicted to have had a fall in 2015: this figure is predicted to rise to 11,240 in 2030.

Oxford Brookes University have produced estimates of the total number of falls occurring in the population based on self-reported falls from the [Health Survey for England 2005](#) and applying these to the size and age of the population in any given area the original survey results are shown below.

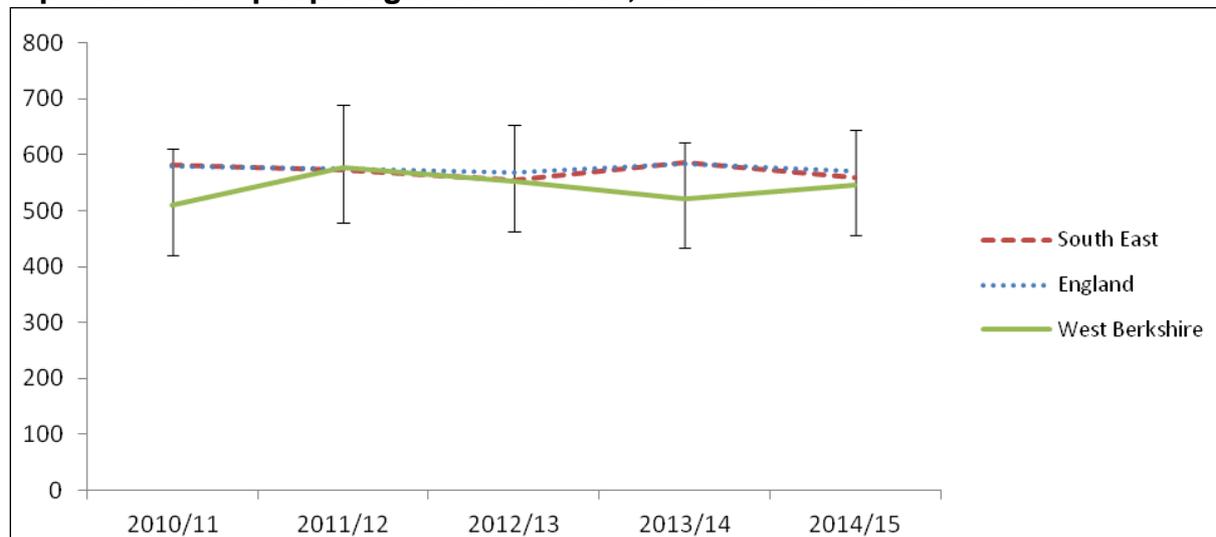
Estimated number of falls by age

Age Range	% males	%females
65-69	18	23
70-74	20	27
75-79	19	27
80-84	31	34
85+	43	43

Source: *Health Survey for England 2005*

Data from the [Public Health Outcome Framework \(PHOF\)](#) shows that in 2014/15 the crude rate of admissions for hip fractures was 545 per 100,000 of the population over 65. This is not significantly different than the England Average

Hip fractures in people aged 65 and over, 2010/11 – 2014/15



Source: *Public Health Outcomes Framework 2015*

Injuries due to falls and hip fractures recorded in hospital data are often used to monitor the number of falls occurring among older people. These measures are included in the Public Health Outcome framework. Although considered a relatively robust way of measuring falls these indicators are not all inclusive as they only count falls that result in a hospital admission and rely on a fall being recorded as the reason for hospital admission in all cases where there were in deed the cause. Injuries due to falls have shown a [linear trend increase since 2010](#) (Public Health England)

The rates of injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over living in West Berkshire are lower than the national average.

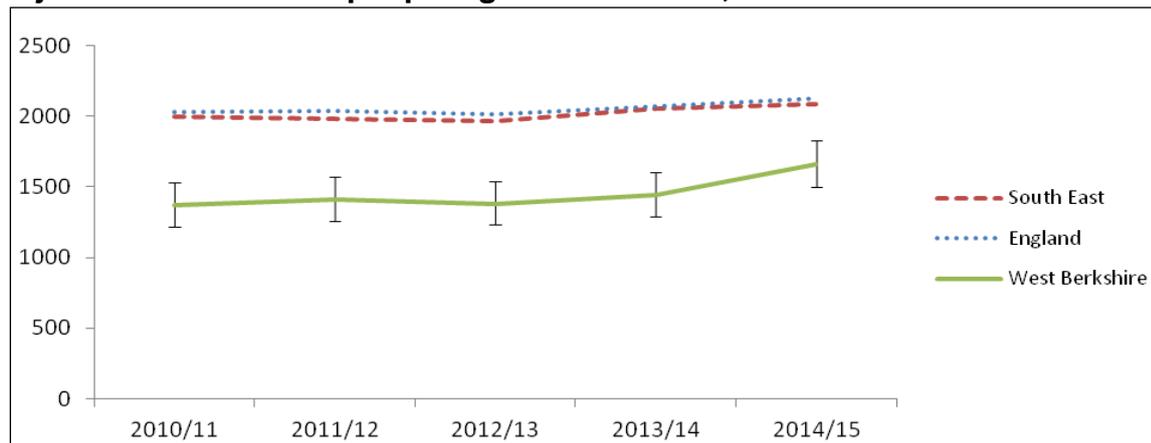
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over 2014/15

Area Name	Count	Rate per 100,000	Compared to England	Compared to South East
Bracknell Forest	341	2067.63	Same	Same
West Berkshire	435	1656.19	Lower	Lower
Reading	384	1851.50	Lower	Lower
Slough	342	2448.46	Higher	Higher
Windsor and Maidenhead	674	2310.89	Same	Higher
Wokingham	452	1648.81	Lower	Lower

Source: *Public Health Outcomes Framework 2015*

In 2014/15, there were 1,656 emergency hospital admissions for falls in persons aged 65 and over per 100,000 population. This figure has slightly increased from 1,441 per 1000,000 in 2013/14.

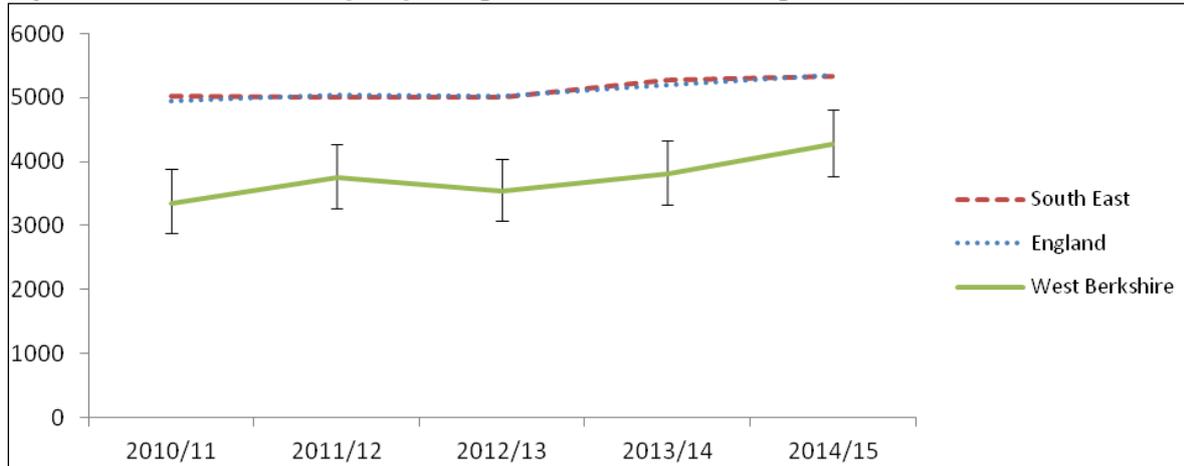
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over, 2010/2011 – 2014/15



Source: *Public Health Outcomes Framework 2015*

In 2014/15 the rate of emergency admissions for injuries due to falls in persons aged 80+ was 4,276 per 100,000 population which is significantly better than the national average.

Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over – aged 80+, 2010/11 – 2014/15



What is the data telling us?

The projected increase in older people sets out the clear need to provide falls prevention services for a growing number of people who may be at risk of falling. Preventative services are the key service to prevent hospital admissions and reduce the economic burden on health and social care services.

Those that live in the rural areas within West Berkshire may have limited access to services due to transport and service delivery locations being predominately based in town locations, at the local hospitals, community Centres, Leisure Centres and GP surgeries. There is a clear need to take such preventative services out to rural areas. Falls are more common for older people and the consequence of falls is more severe.

Recommendations for consideration

Ensuring that people aged 65 and over are routinely asked if they have had a fall when they come into contact with a health professional would be beneficial. We recommend that patients aged 65 and over who present to a health professional after a fall should be offered a multi factorial falls risk assessment and referred, where appropriate, to intervention services to help prevent further falls.

Other services and partner organisations

[Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust falls clinic & balance clinic](#)

[Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - balance services](#)

[Shopmobility](#)

[Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Ophthalmology](#)

[NHS 111](#)

[Keep Mobile](#)

[Steady Steps - falls prevention exercise classes](#)

[Thrive charity](#)

[Get Berkshire Active - Ever Active](#)

National and local strategies

[NICE Guidance 2013: Falls in older people](#)

[NHS Evidence: Falls](#)

[Department of Health: Falls Guidance](#)

Other chapters you might be interested in

End of life care

Excess Winter Deaths

Mental Health (Old Age)

Preventable Sight Loss

If you have any questions about this chapter, please contact Public Health and Wellbeing Team on publichealthandwellbeing@westberks.gov.uk or 01635 503437