

Stand Up Stay Up

Taking the rise out of falls

Evaluation executive summary | April 2019



Stand Up Stay Up programme evaluation – executive summary

Introduction

The *Stand Up Stay Up – taking the rise out of falls* programme was funded through an Innovation, Excellence and Strategic Development Fund (IESD) grant from the then Department of Health for 3 years from April 2016 to March 2019.

The objective of Stand Up Stay Up (SUSU) was to deliver a far-reaching falls prevention programme that would support areas across England to develop, test and disseminate best practice in delivering falls prevention on the ground and build on RoSPA's strategic position as a voluntary sector contributor in the field.

The aims of the programme were to:

- deliver a multi-layered approach to reducing falls and raising public awareness with a greater emphasis on preventing the first fall
- reinforce the ethos of making every contact count, including early identification of people who might be at risk of falling
- support the development of falls pathways that start with and invest in prevention in the community
- highlight the key role that voluntary sector organisations can play as partners in preventing falls alongside health and local authority bodies.

A small RoSPA team supported and delivered the Stand Up Stay Up programme and SUSU activities were linked to five key strands of the programme in a multi-layered approach:

Stand up

RoSPA invited partner agencies in all areas of England who are involved in improving health and quality of life for older people to 'stand up' for falls prevention and help raise its profile on the national agenda.

Join up

Organisations who joined the Stand Up Stay Up network were offered discounted places at RoSPA's national Congress in 2017, which focused on falls prevention, and they could attend the free learning exchange events held in 2017 and 2018.

In the final year of the programme, network members were invited to join a pilot scheme to gather a common dataset set of evidence from strength and balance exercise courses delivered in community settings.

Partner up

Over the 3 years of the programme RoSPA supported 10 local project partnerships in their falls prevention work, helping them to put prevention at the heart of their strategic development to deliver long-term change and test out innovative approaches to community interventions to support prevention of the first fall.

Each local partnership in the Partner Up strand of activity had the opportunity to develop ‘test and learn’ approaches to falls prevention supported by annual grants (£5,000 per year for 3 years) to encourage innovation and capture learning from what works.

Speak up

The Home Safety Congress and 2 learning exchange events enabled local partnerships and other agencies in the network to come together and learn from each other. These events facilitated the dissemination of ideas and practical tools to support the promotion of falls prevention. Partners could also share their work in the *Taking the rise out of falls* e-newsletter and tools and documents could be uploaded on to the SUSU pages of the RoSPA website.

Train up

RoSPA provided 2 days free training in its City & Guilds-accredited Older People’s Safety in the Home course to each local partnership project, with 20 places per day to train up any of their staff or volunteers who had day-to-day contact with older people or their families. Network members could access the Older People’s Safety in the Home course at a discounted rate.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess to what extent SUSU achieved its programme and organisational goals
- Gather, collate and review evidence against each of the programme outcomes
- Reflect on the role of the SUSU team in supporting delivery against outcomes
- Reflect on the overall impact of the programme

The evaluation took a formative approach by maintaining regular communication with the programme team, providing opportunities for them to reflect on learning and keeping up-to-date with changes in delivery or circumstances which had an impact on the progress of the programme.

The focus of the evaluation was to evaluate the impact of the SUSU programme as a whole in promoting falls prevention nationally and in local areas, and to capture learning from the community interventions funded as part of the programme. The 10 local partnerships conducted their own evaluations of funded activity and their reports were a valuable source of evidence for the programme evaluation.

The research was conducted using a mixed methodology including documentary analysis of the annual reports, presentations and supplementary information generated by local partnerships, to identify common themes and specific examples of interest. Quantitative analysis has been undertaken of programme data, such as training course feedback, and there has been a focus on gathering qualitative primary source material, mostly undertaken during visits to local partnership areas, most of which were visited twice.

Activity of 10 local partnerships

Local authority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Birmingham (Northfield)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frailty improvement scheme Polypharmacy project Move It or Lose It Library resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frailty improvement scheme Polypharmacy project Move It or Lose It QTUG pilot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frailty improvement scheme Polypharmacy project Move It or Lose It with QTUG
Blackburn with Darwen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x information events + falls risk assessment Falls prevention tea towel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 12 week strength and balance training & education sessions / QTUG Promotional events with Balance Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 16 week strength and balance training & education sessions / QTUG Promotional events with 'age simulation' suit
Brighton & Hove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls prevention network Strong & Steady flashmob sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls prevention network Dancing for Health groups Promotional video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls prevention network OTAGO training & classes
Bristol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postural Stability Instructor training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying Steady classes commissioned Promotional video & leaflet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying Steady classes Staying Steady Aqua pilot Home Safety & Modification project
Cumbria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on falls prevention Multi-agency falls prevention workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up & About campaign Falls Prevention awareness week Falls Prevention workers recruited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up & About campaign Falls Prevention awareness week Volunteer Falls Champions recruited
London (Hammersmith & Fulham)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x events + strength & balance exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training facilitator recruited Exercise classes delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise classes at BCH Exercise classes at 6 sheltered housing sites
Hampshire (Rushmoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEER courses QTUGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls Friends & Champions developed Stakeholder event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEER courses Falls Friends Steady & Strong classes
Northamptonshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising event Home hazard assessment Online portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OTAGO network & sessions Pharmacists CPD workshop Care & Repair project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited & trained OTAGO leaders Falls prevention dashboard Opticians CPD workshop
Sandwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed falls prevention pathway QTUG training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network to co-ordinate services QTUG assessments in 3 settings Falls prevention tea towel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QTUG assessments in community settings Strategic integration
Southend on Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community falls service 1 x 12 week Dance for Health course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QTUGs trialled in PSI classes & with OT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New marketing material Awareness event with visual impairment glasses

Programme outcomes

Outcome 1: Preventing the first fall embedded as a strategic priority in Local Partnership areas

The evidence shows that in all local partnership areas there was raised awareness of the concept of ‘preventing the first fall’ through Stand Up Stay Up. For some it was a pre-existing strategic priority, in other areas awareness was increased during the programme and, by the end, the concept was more widely recognised and being incorporated into strategic plans.

During SUSU public, private and voluntary sector agencies came to understand that they all had a role to play in primary falls prevention, at strategic and operational levels. Agencies began to map where falls prevention fitted against their own strategic priorities and align relevant services with falls prevention activity in other organisations through collaboration.

Outcome 2: Increased knowledge of safety of older people, including falls prevention, in frontline staff and volunteers

A key element of the SUSU programme was to support an increase in the falls prevention knowledge and skills of frontline workers and volunteers who interact with older people in their homes and communities. There is evidence from local partnership areas that this was achieved across the programme.

More than 300 people attended Older People’s Safety in the Home training in 2017-2019. 22 training sessions were delivered in 14 different local authorities (LAs) of which 15 were in local partnership areas and 6 were offered the SUSU discounted cost.

Figure A Reported outcomes



Survey respondents

Figure B Changes to practice as a result of the course



Trainee feedback & survey responses

In several local partnership areas people received training in the use of strength and balance exercises to improve older people’s postural stability. The levels and intensity of the training varied considerably, depending on whether people would be giving basic advice to someone in their home or teaching classes of older people.

Outcome 3: Raised awareness of preventing the first fall across England

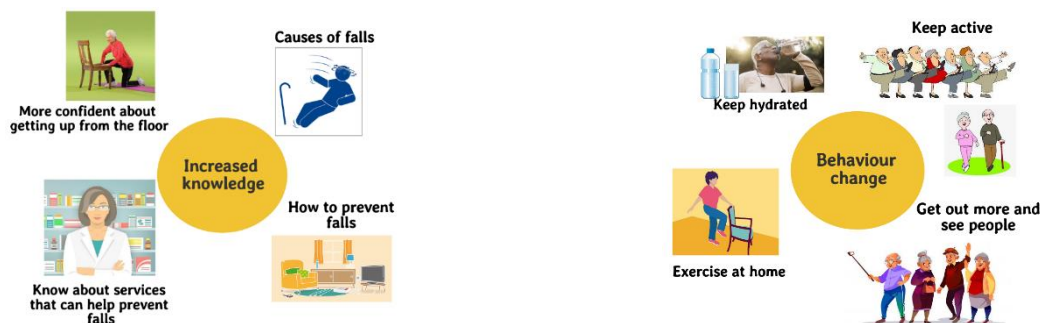
At all levels of the programme, SUSU has been successful in raising awareness of preventing the first fall. At a national level, RoSPA's involvement in the National Falls Prevention Coordination Group (NFPCG) helped to broaden the scope of the group from a clinical post-fall focus to include a more community-based pre-fall dimension.

For local partnership areas, a key benefit of being involved with SUSU has been the promotion of preventing the first fall, either to reinforce the direction they were already moving in or to enable partners to think creatively about a shift in emphasis in falls prevention in their areas, from post- to pre-fall services.

There is evidence that frontline workers and volunteers have developed a more discerning mindset in supporting older people and are seeing that it is part of their role to look for opportunities to prevent someone from falling.

Feedback from older people has been positive from all areas of the programme.

Figure C Outcomes for older people



People described how they thought more about trip hazards and that learning about how muscle tone decreases with age prompted them to try to do more, once they had gained confidence from attending strength and balance classes. An important difference that affected people's behaviour was a reduction in the fear of falling as people felt physically stronger.

Outcome 4: A sustainable falls prevention network

SUSU created a network offer that was opened up to individuals and organisations working with older people across the country, and in particular people with an understanding of the need to achieve a step change in how falls prevention was perceived and delivered. Network membership at the end of the programme (March 2019) stood at 207 individuals from a diverse range of organisations across the country and 47 organisation members.

The Home Safety Congresses and learning events played a big part in sharing ideas and best practice. Partnerships have supported each other to deliver evidence-based strength and balance classes, such as OTAGO, and shared examples of integrated falls pathways. People reported that network membership enabled partners to feel part of a national campaign. It helped people to share information and introduced people to new ways of working.

The extent to which the SUSU network is sustainable now the programme is completed is difficult to assess. The online resources will remain on the RoSPA website and be updated as policy changes and more good practice emerge and falls prevention will continue to be included in RoSPA's Home Safety e-newsletter and the Home Safety Journal.

People from different areas made direct connections with each other and some will continue to exchange information and good practice. Should the common dataset pilot project be extended and funded, there may be opportunities for network members to continue to contribute and learn from that.

Outcome 5: Preventing falls a strategic priority in RoSPA

Preventing the first fall has a strong strategic fit with RoSPA's vision and mission to prevent life-changing accidental injuries. The intention of SUSU was to embed the safety of older adults, in particular falls prevention, as a strategic priority in RoSPA by raising the profile of the organisation as a leader in the field of falls prevention. This outcome has been achieved.

RoSPA is a member of the National Falls Prevention Coordination Group (NFPCG) facilitated by Public Health England (PHE). Through SUSU, RoSPA contributed towards the development of the National Falls and Fractures Consensus Statement and the resource pack that accompanied it. The NFPCG acted as an expert reference group to the National Accident Prevention Strategy Implementation Group and contributed to the Older People's section of *Safe and active at all ages: a national strategy to prevent serious accidental injuries in England (2018)*¹, which was produced by RoSPA in collaboration with other agencies.

The SUSU programme enabled RoSPA to increase its corporate intelligence and knowledge about the role of falls prevention in keeping older people safe and well. It enabled the charity to strengthen its relationships with other organisations working with older people and build a new alliance around the concept that falls are not an inevitable part of ageing.

Strength and balance common dataset pilot

An additional programme activity, a pilot scheme to collect common data from projects involved with SUSU on the impact of strength and balance exercises, was run for 9 months from April-December 2018. 12 local authority areas signed up to take part in the pilot. Indicative data showed positive results and provided evidence of decreased risk and fear of falling in older people who participated in strength and balance exercise classes.

Summary of learning points

Falls prevention is everybody's business

One of the key learning points that emerged from SUSU is that all agencies have a role to play in falls prevention, at strategic and operational levels. The concept that falls prevention is everybody's business, in public, private, voluntary and community sectors, gained traction over the life of the programme and was clearly articulated by many local partners at the second learning exchange event. This includes the role that older people play in maintaining the own health and wellbeing.

¹ <https://www.rospace.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/public-health/naps/naps.pdf>

Partnership working

Some local partnership areas had pre-existing falls prevention groups or partnerships and therefore had a foundation of trust to build on during the programme. In other areas, partners came together during SUSU and had to invest time in getting to know each other and learn to work with the different cultures and constraints they each brought to the partnership.

Areas with strong partnerships also recognised the value of having falls prevention champions positioned in key partner agencies to raise awareness and engage colleagues in the programme activities. For instance, in the development of effective falls prevention pathways and referral mechanisms across agencies and public and voluntary sectors.

Workforce development

SUSU has enabled the training of frontline workers and volunteers in skills and knowledge to help prevent falls in the home and community settings. This has also supported broader recognition across public and voluntary sector frontline workforces that falls are everybody's business.

Partners who trained instructors to deliver strength and balances classes in community settings found that creating a network for instructors to support each other also helped to maintain consistency in delivery.

Before and after QTUG™ data provided reassurance that informal classes using evidence-based methods like OTAGO or FABS achieved positive outcomes. Emerging evidence from the common dataset pilot indicates that it does not have to be clinicians who deliver strength and balance or postural stability classes, they can be successfully delivered by people in other roles, with the appropriate training and support.

The introduction of trained non-specialists who deliver elements of a falls prevention service, for instance initial assessment during a home visit, basic armchair exercises and onward referral to a community-based service, has worked well in some areas.

Communicating messages

Local partnerships learnt that raising awareness amongst older people who are at risk of falling, but may not be aware of it, has to take a different approach than to those who have already fallen. It can be time-consuming and challenging to reach people who do not have falls on their radar but may be at risk.

Partners learnt that older people who have not fallen are more interested in staying healthy, strong and independent for as long as possible. Providers found they needed to make activities fun, easy to join and easy get to in non-clinical community settings to encourage regular attendance. Local partners learnt that simple messaging is effective and how important it is for consistent messages to be shared and repeated across agencies and by frontline workers visiting people in their homes.

Social benefits

A key learning point from local partnerships was to recognise and emphasise that (falls prevention) activities have a strong social aspect and can be fun. The social and peer support

element of strength and balance classes and other activities should be built into activity planning and facilitated as part of delivery.

Older people reported going to activities helped to reduce their social isolation and, for this reason, it is important that there are supported links into follow on activity when people finish a strength and balance course.

Assessment & measuring impact

Frontline workers should be trained to use baseline and follow up assessment tools such as QTUGs and i-FESI and given enough time and support to conduct assessments consistently and effectively. Evidence from SUSU suggests that where non-clinical practitioners have a good understanding of why they are collecting assessment and monitoring information, are confident with employing the data capture tools and are able to interpret the results, then they are more likely to capture information consistently with the added benefits that both they and the older people can see for themselves what they have achieved.

Sustainability

Sustainability of activity initiated during the SUSU programme is most likely where partnership working has facilitated the pooling of resources, people, venues and volunteers across agencies.

There is a positive example of strength and balance classes being independently sustainable as part of a general leisure & fitness offer. Get the message right and people will sign up and pay to take part.

Conclusions

This report has looked at the evidence against the stated outcomes of the Stand Up Stay Up programme and the conclusion is that overall the programme has delivered successfully on its aims within the relatively small budget and staff team resources available.

- SUSU provided an impetus to local partnerships to take positive action on falls prevention in community settings and provided an arena for the voluntary and community sector to emerge as a valued and respected partner in preventing the first fall. The SUSU challenge to be innovative inspired some partnerships to think outside of the box. It enabled some areas to lever in additional funding for falls prevention in times of austerity. The role of the SUSU staff as connectors was an important aspect of strengthening local partnerships.
- Participation in the National Falls Prevention Coordination Group and the production of the new national accident prevention strategy show how RoSPA raised its profile as a leader in falls prevention nationally, and in local areas across the country. The organisation has a firm foundation to continue to support the drive to embedding preventing the first fall and making it everybody's business.
- People from public, private, voluntary and community organisations, clinical and community-based, accessed the SUSU network and used it to share and gather good practice. The exchange of learning has been both practical and supportive as people have tried new ways of working and tested new resources.

- Frontline workers in the public and voluntary sectors, such as officers in Fire and Rescue Services and Care and Repair housing teams and community workers were trained by RoSPA and have become more observant when conducting home visits and more active in looking for falls risks and hazards.

The wider community workforce in local partnership areas, including exercise professionals, pharmacists, opticians, carers and many more roles have increased awareness of the importance of preventing people from falling and greater understanding of how they can contribute to keeping people safe and encouraging them in self-care and prevention.

- The aim of the common dataset pilot scheme to gather primary data that could contribute to an evidence base on the benefits of delivering strength and balance exercise in community settings, fitted well with the ethos and ambition of the SUSU programme. The indicative findings of the scheme are that strength and balance activities delivered by non-specialist practitioners who have received the appropriate training can achieve measurably positive outcomes for the older people who take part in them.
- By re-framing ‘preventing the first fall’ as ‘living a healthy life safely and for longer’, SUSU has challenged the often-prevailing view that falls are an inevitable part of ageing. Evidence from the programme shows falls prevention becoming a shared priority for strategic partners and integrated into wider Health and Wellbeing strategies for supporting people to live well for longer. Instead of falls prevention being viewed in isolation, the structures are emerging in which it can become everybody’s business.

“What the project’s done is brought to the fore in people’s minds the opportunity to intervene even earlier (...), and to appreciate that actually the best outcome for individuals is to not fall in the first place.”

Local partnership lead

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