NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration

Impact Inclusion Innovation Investment

Sickness to prevention

Reducing falls in care homes: A best practice model for safer environments

ARC East Midlands in collaboration with ARC Wessex, PenARC (now NIHR ARC South West) and ARC Greater Manchester

The challenge
Falls are a leading cause of injury, loss of confidence, and hospital admissions among care home residents. Nationally, 40% of hospital admissions from care homes are due to falls, with ambulance callouts alone costing the NHS over £41 million annually.

The approach
The Action Falls programme provides care homes with a comprehensive approach to preventing falls among residents through a multifactorial risk checklist, practical guidance, and staff training to create safer environments and reduce injury and hospital admissions. ARC East Midlands funded research to evaluate the programme across East Midlands care homes, with findings now contributing to a national implementation study.

The outcomes and impact
The evidence shows:

- 43% reduction in falls among care home residents in a randomised controlled trial (RCT)
- 1,657 care home staff trained across 57 UK care homes
- £2,227 monthly savings in ambulance callouts in a typical 50-resident care home; potential annual NHS savings over £1 million
- Recognised as best practice in the NHS England Enhanced Health in Care Homes framework and endorsed by WHO
- Linked within NICE falls prevention guidance
- Implementation toolkit and train-the-trainer elearning now supporting rollout across UK regions
- Evidence contributed to Department of Health and Social Care Falls Themed Review and policy brief shared with APPGs, commissioners and policymakers.
- Further studies underway in stroke survivors and domiciliary care

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