

Collaboration statement: LLT/AGILE/BASES

Partnership Working for Successful Falls Care Pathways

Later Life Training (LLT)¹, AGILE² and the British Association of Sport and Exercise Science³ (BASES) are leading bodies for education, research and professional practice in exercise and physical activity for older people. LLT, AGILE and BASES recognise they need to work in partnership to improve the quality and effectiveness of exercise pathways for older people. This collaborative statement has been written by LLT, AGILE and BASES to outline their intent to work more closely together to optimise exercise provision for older people. Strength and balance exercise pathways designed to reduce falls and fractures in populations of older people will be used in this statement to help articulate the value added by collaborative working between LLT, AGILE and BASES.

For over 15 years LLT have benefited from professional support from AGILE and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists in the area of evidence-based exercise provision for older people at risk of falls. Alongside, BASES and allied organisations have been collaborating to optimise career pathway development and education training standards for exercise physiologists and exercise professionals (i.e. Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs), Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity and International Associations (CIMSPA)) in response to the UK system wide falls and frailty prevention agenda and rising demand for evidence based falls prevention exercise pathways. They have been involved in the Steering Committees and Expert Groups of many National Strategy Documents and Statements ([Public Health England Falls Consensus Statement](#); [Public Health England Cost-Effective Commissioning](#); [Scotland's Falls and Fracture Strategy](#); [National Prudent Healthcare Falls Prevention Task Force \(Wales\)](#) and Campaigns such as [Take The Balance Challenge](#); [Physiotherapy Works: falls – a community approach](#); [Get Up and Go Video and Resources](#); [Centre for Ageing Better – Raising the Bar on strength and balance](#)).

The evidence for the benefits of exercise in improving age-related decline and preventing falls are significant ([Sherrington et al., 2019](#)). Evidence exists that physiotherapists help prevent falls following acute rehabilitation ([Sherrington et al., 2015](#)) which includes referral to on-going community exercise programmes provided by appropriately trained exercise professionals ([Hawley-Hague et al., 2017](#)). However, more recent research has identified aspects of exercise provision for people at risk of falls and/or fractures need to be optimized further - through focused research in appropriate facilities delivered by appropriately trained professionals ([Iliffe et al., 2014](#); [Duckham et al., 2015](#); [Hawley-Hague et al., 2017](#)). The New Physical Activity Guidelines for Health in the UK now have strength and balance activities recommended for

¹ Later Life Training is a not for profit Training Company that, since 2003, has trained health, social care and fitness professionals to deliver evidence based exercise programmes to frailer older people and stroke survivors.

² AGILE is a professional network of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) for physiotherapists working with older people. The CSP is the main overarching membership body for physiotherapists

³ BASES is the professional body representing sport and exercise science professionals and higher education in the UK, with the BASES Clinical Exercise Science & Practice Special Interest Group providing a network to develop research, education and practice for exercise scientists working in exercise for health.

adults as well as older adults, to optimise functional capacity through the life course ([CMO, 2019](#)).

Additionally, LLT, AGILE and BASES have identified opportunities for improvement in falls prevention exercise provision which could be supported by them working collaboratively. These opportunities include clarification of what is best practice in falls exercise pathways in relation to multi-disciplinary and cross-organisational team working. Integrated falls exercise pathways are key to the realization of the benefits of falls prevention exercise, including improving the lives of older people and reducing harm from falls.

Therefore, the shared purpose of the LLT, AGILE and BASES collaboration is **‘the optimisation of partnership working between physiotherapists and exercise professionals across falls prevention care pathways to support effective evidence-based exercise interventions at the right time with the most appropriate professional for the individual’**. The aim is for a seamless transition between rehabilitation and community exercise services for the individual ensuring dose and fidelity to evidence based practice is adhered to.

The fundamental aim of the collaboration is to support all stakeholders across all sectors, including health and social care commissioners, involved in falls prevention care pathway delivery to achieve best practice in exercise pathways for older people at risk of fall through:

- clearly defined care pathways including points of access and who can refer where/when i.e. including the transition of older people who have fallen or are at risk of falling from clinical settings to their own homes in the community;
- transparent roles and responsibilities for all exercise professionals involved across the entire pathway and across sectors (i.e. physiotherapists and exercise professionals) and
- robust monitoring and evaluation, including the monitoring of training and continuing professional education of the professionals involved in care delivery.

References

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