# Experiences and motivations of older adults completing Age UK Strength and Balance training in North Tyneside

L McColl [1] ; S W Parry [1] ; M Poole [1]

[1] Population Health Sciences Institute; Newcastle University.

Twitter: @Lewis_McColl1

Newcastle University

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration North East and North Cumbria

## Introduction

- Approximately 30% of older adults fall annually(1)
- Facilitating successful interventions is key to reducing preventable age-related falls.
- Older adults may be referred to the North Tyneside Community Falls Prevention Service for a multi-factorial falls assessment (2)
- Users of the service may be referred to local Age UK strength and balance classes, following an adapted version of the Otago Exercise Programme.

## Research Aim:

- To explore the experiences of community dwelling older adults completing attending strength and balance training, particularly in any noticeable changes in their behaviours

## Methods

- Participants were recruited through the quantitative arm of the mixed methods study **ref**
- Participants were required to have signed up for Age UK North Tyneside Strength and Balance training
- Semi-structured one to one interviews were used, following a phenomological approach
- Interviews were carried out two to four weeks after the end of the Age UK training classes
- Transcripts were inductively thematically analysed

## Results

- 18 interviews were completed January to November 2023
- Participants were aged between 69-89, with 15 female and 3 male.
- 13 of the 18 participants scored higher than 23 on the FES-I (indicating concerns about Falling)
- Four themes were identified: Pre Class, Opportunity, Motivation and Follow On

### Pre Class

- All participants discussed feeling apprehension of some level prior to the class, primarily around whether or not they would benefit from the classes

> *"I wouldn't have been the first person to go out and look for a class but because it was there and organised, I thought, I'll give it a try. If you don't give it a try, you'll never know."*

### Opportunity

- A minority of participants described having issues accessing the service, particularly accessing the free transport and having issues with the venue itself
- The majority of participants discussed that the social and support structures improved their experience of the intervention

### Motivation

- Users described feeling accountable to both the trainers and other Age UK users

> *"She [the trainer] seemed to give a lot of confidence back."*

- New behaviours were predominantly based around protective behaviours rather than increasing physical activity levels.

### Follow On

- The majority of participants reported attending (or wishing to attend) further classes
- A minority wished to attend more classes, but didn't feel able due to financial or health reasons.

## Conclusion

- Participants had a broadly positive experience of the intervention, but few discussed adopting new positive behaviours
- Successfully addressing barriers requires better communication of existing support structures.

> *"I think if I needed to, if I started falling again because I've never fallen since so I feel quite pleased about that"*

This study/project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria (NENC) (NIHR200173). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

References

1. Parry SW, Hill H, Lawson J, Lawson N, Green D, Trundle H, et al. A Novel Approach to Proactive Primary Care–Based Case Finding and Multidisciplinary Management of Falls, Syncope, and Dizziness in a One-Stop Service: Preliminary Results. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. 2016;64(11):2368-73.
2. Ganz DA, Latham NK. Prevention of Falls in Community-Dwelling Older Adults. New England Journal of Medicine. 2020;382(8):734-43.