

Summary of the West Norfolk Falls Project October 2023

What am I doing?

Establish a community project, that will enable older people who have had a fall in the community to be picked up quickly, rather than waiting on the floor for a long time for an ambulance.

Why do I want to do it - four reasons:

1. *To prevent long lies on the floor of older people after a fall.*

A long lie on the floor is inevitable after a fall because we only have two options to pick people up. The SWIFT Team or 999. The SWIFT Team often do not attend because they cannot attend after two hours and they do not have the staff in West Norfolk to attend within the two hours. Also, they will not attend if there is even a minor injury. The health of the elderly can quickly decline on a long lie

2. *To enable our Ambulance service to be better used for the emergencies that it is set up for. Eg strokes, heart attacks and road traffic accidents*

At the moment Ambulances are being tied up on the forecourt of the QEH waiting admission. If an ambulance is used for a fall, which is deemed as needing a hospital visit it can tie up a much ambulance and its crew for as much as a day.

I have discussed the situation with the ambulance service who say that 17 per cent of their none urgent calls are falls of people over 65. There are 39 500 people in West Norfolk over 65 and whilst all of them will not be prone to falls, this is a large number of people who could be subject to a long lie on the floor, waiting for an ambulance. The ambulance service is very supportive of the scheme.

3. *To prevent unnecessary transportation and admission to hospital after a fall.*

Often because the patient is unknown to the ambulance service they will be taken to hospital after a fall. This is because of checks that are undertaken and which show a paramedic that a hospital visit is needed. However, the results of these checks could be normal for the elderly individual and not warrant a trip to the QEH

4. Personal experience

My reason for being so keen to develop this initiative is because my mother is prone to falls and has had a number over the past two years. As I am on my own with my mother, I have been unable to lift her and have called the SWIFT TEAM at Norfolk County Council. Each time the team have been unable to attend and I have been advised to call 999. The last fall mum had was in February and we were advised of a five hour wait for an ambulance, fortunately we did not have to wait this long but mum did end up with a wait of 9 hours on the QEH forecourt. I have since found out from the health service that a long lie on the floor is dangerous for an elderly person and that this situation is typical in West Norfolk.

How am I doing it?

By establishing a volunteer work force recruited by a registered charity. The volunteers will be trained to use the Razier Chairs to lift an elderly person after a fall, assess them and decide on a forward path either to a clinician, in the community, hospital or home to rest.

The volunteers will work in Hubs of neighbouring parishes. They will live in the hub and be part of the community, this will increase the support network for the volunteers and is more likely to result in an older person being picked up by someone who is familiar to them and definitely known to their community. They will be fully trained and will be insured to do the work.

Present position

Who are involved?

The ambulance service is supportive

They have met with me on a number of occasions and have advised, assisted and linked me into key people in order to develop the project.

The providers of the equipment are supportive

They would like the scheme to become a pilot for a national scheme and are offering the project 11 free chairs which is what I asked for in order to implement the pilot.

NALC are supportive.

I have emailed all 101 parish councils and offered a webinar to NALC members. This was with a view to engaging 4 Parish Councils and the three town councils as leads for the hubs. We now have the West Hub established and I am in discussions with councils in the North, South, and East of the borough with a view to them becoming lead councils for the development of the hub in their area. I have signed up one of the towns and we have formed a working group to develop that hub. Work is ongoing to engage the other two towns.

NALC is also going to speak to people in the Lead Parishes in the other parts of the borough to secure their involvement.

The Health and Social Care and Voluntary Sector

Sector are represented on the steering group.

Legal Statues

The project at the moment will be Governed by West Norfolk Carers subject to the confirmation of their board meeting in November.

Funding

The project is not yet funded as it is in its embryotic stage. However, funding will be sort via West Norfolk Carers once it is live.

Volunteer Recruitment, Retention, Support and Training

The volunteers will be recruited in the Hubs with the support of the Hubs. The Hubs will identify the number of volunteers necessary for their hub

Retention and support of volunteers will be offered via an experienced Volunteer Development Manager. Training of the volunteers will be undertaken via the ambulance service or another well-known and trusted organisation, the Equipment Provider, and the Volunteer Development Manager.

Insurance

All volunteers will be insured to undertake their role

Delivery

I have developed a business model which allows us to have one single number for the project and a report back system to ensure a clinician or family member is involved before we close the case

Marketing

The west have an IT consultant on board and a media person and they are developing a Webb site and leaflets

We already have the community alarm system on board to distribute the number. I am going talk to a number of community groups around the borough with a view to the development of a marketing campaign during which the number will be distributed to older people and their family carers.

Sue McDowell
Project initiator

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