

# **Steady Steps**

## **Information for Referrers**

### **What is Steady Steps?**

Steady Steps is a new community-based health referral programme which delivers group exercise sessions to older people who have had or are at risk of having a fall. It is run by Edinburgh Leisure and funded by the NHS Change Fund. The service aims are to increase endurance, strength, balance, confidence, independence and social life of the participants. This in turn should contribute to a reduction in the number of falls, fractures, hospital admissions and bed days as a result of a fall in Edinburgh, and so reduce the cost to the NHS Lothian.

### **The programme**

Classes run as a 16 week programme to be delivered in community settings in Edinburgh, such as leisure centres and community centres. Weeks 1 and 16 will entail some basic functional tests (eg. functional reach test) and some ADL questionnaires to help measure the impact of the programme and ensure future funding of the programme. Exercises will be based on the Otago and FaME exercises as detailed in the Later Life Training PSI manual and will work towards including 1 hour of exercise (including warm-up and cool-down) over the duration of the programme. After the exercise component, participants will be offered complimentary refreshments allowing an opportunity for social networking. Classes will be delivered by at least one PSI qualified instructor with one other staff member or volunteer present (do not have to be PSI qualified) to assist in the delivery of the programme and help facilitate the social interaction aspect after exercise. At the end of the 16 week programme, it is hoped that participants will be rehabilitated to the point of joining / attending other community based exercise classes to continue with their physical activity journey. These exit pathways will be identified and participants can be signposted to them on completion of the Steady Steps programme.

### **Who can refer?**

Referrals are accepted from physiotherapists and occupational therapists at the following departments:

- Liberton Day Hospital
- Older People's Rehabilitation Assessment (at Leith Community Treatment Centre)
- Western General Assessment & Rehabilitation Centre
- Edinburgh Community Physiotherapy Service
- Domiciliary Care
- Intermediate Care

Referrals are also accepted from Consultants for Medicine of the Elderly.

## **Referral Form Completion Guidelines**

The information captured on the referral form is important for the instructor to be able to develop a programme appropriate to the individual and make any adaptations necessary. Referrals will only be accepted if the participant meets the referral criteria detailed below and the appropriate Steady Steps referral form is completed. The referral form should be self-explanatory, however if you do have any questions or suggestions for improvement please get in contact with the programme coordinator using the details at the bottom of this page.

### **Inappropriate Referrals**

If a referred participant is found to be inappropriate (eg. they are unable to complete the sessions and would perhaps benefit more from physiotherapist input), the referral will be returned to the referrer with a supporting letter / phone call explaining why. Or in the case of an inappropriate referral from a consultant, Steady Steps will re-refer directly to the appropriate Day Hospital. The referring consultant will be informed of this action in this instance).

### **How much does it cost?**

Participants will be charged a nominal fee of £1 per session with complimentary refreshments provided.

### **Can carers attend?**

Carers are welcome to attend with participants and assist but this should be noted on the referral form.

### **Is there transport provided?**

There is a limited budget available for participant transportation, however it can be provided for those who are unable to attend without this provision. The referrer should first ask the question,

*“Have you thought about how you might get there?”*

to ensure the participant really is in need of transport. The one of the main goals of this programme is to help participants regain their independence and so it is hoped that participants will gain the strength, balance, coordination and confidence to travel alone by the end of the programme, if they are not already able to.

## Referral Criteria

### Suitable for referral

1. Agreed to engage in 16 week physical activity programme
2. Currently clinically able to participate in 16 week physical activity programme
3. Able to monitor and regulate intensity of own physical activity
4. And at least two of the following:
  - a. History / at risk of falling
  - b. Poor gait / balance
  - c. Feeling unstable / unsteady
  - d. Lone bone density / previous fracture

### Unsuitable for referral

- Recent injurious fall without a medical examination
- Significant drop in BP during exercise
- Unstable / acute heart failure
- Unable to maintain seated upright posture due to neurological deficits
- Hip or knee replacement surgery in previous 3 months
- Uncontrolled:
  - o Hypertension (Resting SBP >180mmHg or resting DBP >100mmHg)
  - o Pain
  - o Angina
  - o Tachycardia >100bpm
  - o Acute systemic illness (cancer pneumonia)
  - o Severe visual or vestibular disturbances
- Impaired cognition (unable to follow simple movement instructions). Referrer should use own subjective judgement based on experience working with the patient to date.
- Anyone who may place themselves and others at risk (eg. participants who are unable to monitor or adapt their performance or whose level of assistance endangers other or themselves; finally participants whose behaviour contravenes safety standards.)