

How can we make homes safer and reduce the prevalence of trips and falls amongst the vulnerable elderly?



Project background

With insufficient finances to meet the growing demand for housing services and adaptations, Teignbridge Council housing team are exploring new innovative approaches to make homes safer and reduce falls.



Aging population

East Teignmouth in Teignbridge is an area with a higher than average aging population. 7% of the population is over 85yrs. This is predicted to be the average population of over 85yrs in the whole England in 2062.



Poor housing

Older people spend between 70-90% of their time in their homes. 1,100 properties (16.6%) of properties in Teignmouth have a category 1 hazard. Around one in three people over the age of 65 and one in two people over the age of 80 fall at least once each year.



Health impact

Every day, 8 people in England die from a fall (commonest cause of death from accident in over 65s). 496 people aged over 65 in South Devon will have a fractured neck of femur as a result of a fall. 143 (28%) of these fallers will die within a year and 163 will require a permanent care home admission.



Financial impact

The Kingsfund study in Torbay has shown that when comparing the 12 months before and after the fall, the most dramatic increase is in community care costs (160%). People aged over 60 in Teignbridge are responsible for 78% (approx £593k) of the Disabled Facility Grant budget in Teignbridge.

Collaboration



The project began with a series of workshops facilitated via the Design Council's Design Leadership for public services programme. These workshops gave the team an opportunity to explore new collaborative ways of working across housing, health, the voluntary sector and social care. They quickly adopted a user-centered design approach which resulted in three priority areas for further development; 1) Consultation and engagement with people at risk of falls, 2) Awareness raising and 3) Service prototyping.

Understanding experiences

Teignbridge Council and the Design Council interviewed eight older residents who had experienced falls and captured their stories in a series of videos. These stories helped us to understand why falls happen, what happens after a fall and how it makes people feel.

Listen to their stories at:
www.fallproof.co.uk/index.php/welcome/information



Raising awareness

Teignbridge District Council commissioned Service Design agency Sea Communications to help them explore these issues in more depth, map user experiences and develop ideas for raising awareness. GP surgeries were used to test three different awareness campaigns. The aim being to increase patient requests for further advice by raising awareness and help them understand the impact of falls.



Sound Advice

Using popular records from the 1960's, Sea designed a vintage record installation to engage the target audience about falls through music & memories.

Fall Victim

A crime scene dead body outline with a message and hard hitting statistics about falls on a caution sign next to it.

Fall Proof

A fun campaign suggesting that people apply bubble wrap to make their homes "fall proof". The associated material signposts people to a free Fall Proof home check service.

Service prototyping

Sea worked with partners to design a blueprint for a potential new home assessment and reporting service which is currently being piloted.



Fall Proof – Online photo submission

To engage family members so that they can self-diagnose hazards in the home and receive advice on how to make necessary changes to their loved ones homes.



Fall Proof – Home assessment service

Offering free home assessments and tailored reports to identify potential hazards in the home and suggest ways to reduce the risk of trips and falls.



Volunteer support pack

A simple information pack with advice about how to avoid trips and falls in the home. Also included is a home assessment checklist and training with the NHS falls prevention team.

User testing

We visited the Alice Cross centre in Teignmouth to gather feedback from older residents about the raising awareness campaigns and service prototypes.



What needs further testing?

- Volunteer home assessment service
- Community group (drop in centre) for advice and guidance about living independently at home.
- Falls Pathway guide for fallers, their friends and families.

Fold out to see **Falls Pathways**. Identified issues in the current system and opportunities for improvements in services.