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Sharing best way to prevent falls

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's trailblazing falls service staff have been invited to share their experience at the 1st North of England Falls Summit on March 16th.

The Trust will be represented by falls specialist practitioner Dean Metz and Sister Pam Vickers, who will focus on its innovative approach to improving the patient's journey by offering a joint nursing and physiotherapy assessment.

Patients in South Tyneside and Sunderland are seen in a 'one-stop' clinic, where they have all the necessary tests, such as blood pressure and fracture risk, and are offered the joint assessments to identify possible contributory factors to their falls and the best way to help them. Depending on their individual needs, they are then given physiotherapy and a tailored exercise programme. When staff in the Trust's community falls team in Sunderland reviewed the effect of this approach, they discovered an 81% decrease in falls among patients completing its rehabilitation programme, with 69 per cent going on to have no further falls.

Mr Metz said: "One in three people over 65 will suffer a fall this year and that ratio increases to one in two for people over 80. Although everybody falls at some point in their life, older adults are more at risk of injury, fracture, loss of function, loss of independence and even loss of life. South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is leading the way in protecting people in the community from falls. When each health professional separately does an assessment patients can become tired of repeating the same information and sometimes detail can be left out when answering the next clinician's questions. Our joint assessment improves patients' experience and ensures no information is lost or missed."

Miss Vickers added: "We have evidence that the type of assessment we offer, coupled with the individually-tailored follow-up, works. Patients tell us they feel stronger, that their confidence is improved and that they have not had any further falls."

The 1st North of England Falls Summit will be held on Monday, March 16th, at The Queens Hotel, Leeds.

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Pictured above: Dean Metz and Pam Vickers, of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's falls service

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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