

# GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FALLS IN THE ELDERLY

## PRIMARY CARE



THE ROYAL BOURNEMOUTH  
AND CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITALS  
NHS TRUST



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES**

The issues around elderly people falling and their subsequent injuries have become more and more a focus of public and political attention. From being a Cinderella subject of a Cinderella specialty it is now gaining momentum and the interest of Purchasing Authorities.

It is from this background that I was approached by the Dorset Health Authority to produce an audit of elderly people falling within Dorset. A look at the available literature showed that there were few standards to audit against, and the task in hand soon became the much more challenging one of producing Guidelines for the whole County that would subsequently be audited.

Falls are most often multi-factorial in their origin and the only way to deal with them satisfactorily is in a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach. With this in mind, a Steering Group was convened and the skeleton of the Guidelines produced.

These were to be simple, attractive, relative and as effective as current literature allowed.

The enormity of the task was emphasised by the Group's wish for some form of guideline to be accessible to all involved in the care of elderly people throughout Dorset. Thus, the sub-groups of Residential Care, Primary Care, Accident and Emergency and Secondary Care performed in a simmering multi-disciplinary, multi-agency way as the steering group.

Patients' views were sought via the Community Health Council and, as with all clinical decisions, falls interventions and treatments should be with the full consent of the patient.

The distillate of the Group's workings was presented at a workshop in the autumn of 1999 to trial-run the Guidelines with those who will be using them. The success on the day and the reception of the Guidelines reflected the hard work put into each group especially by their respective chairmen.

A full implementation programme has been developed to ensure that the Guidelines are in place in all areas in an appropriate and timely manner.

The Guidelines are summarised as an algorithm and presented with supporting information including recommended assessment tools. Decisions (diamonds and blue) and processes (rectangle and yellow) guide the user appropriately through the falls preventative measures, assessment and treatment. Please see key on page 1.

These are the finished product..... for now. Guidelines must be regularly reviewed and improved through audit and the comments of those using them. We hope to produce these updates as and when indicated and needed. These will, I hope, not be the final version. The work continues.

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## **MEMBERS OF THE PRIMARY PREVENTION/CARE WORKING GROUP**

Dr John Evans, GP - **Chairman of the Group**  
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 Mrs Bernie Watson, Physiotherapist  
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 Mr John Dermondy, Adult Social Services Commissioning  
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 Mrs Cath Doman, Senior Practitioner, Social Services Department  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

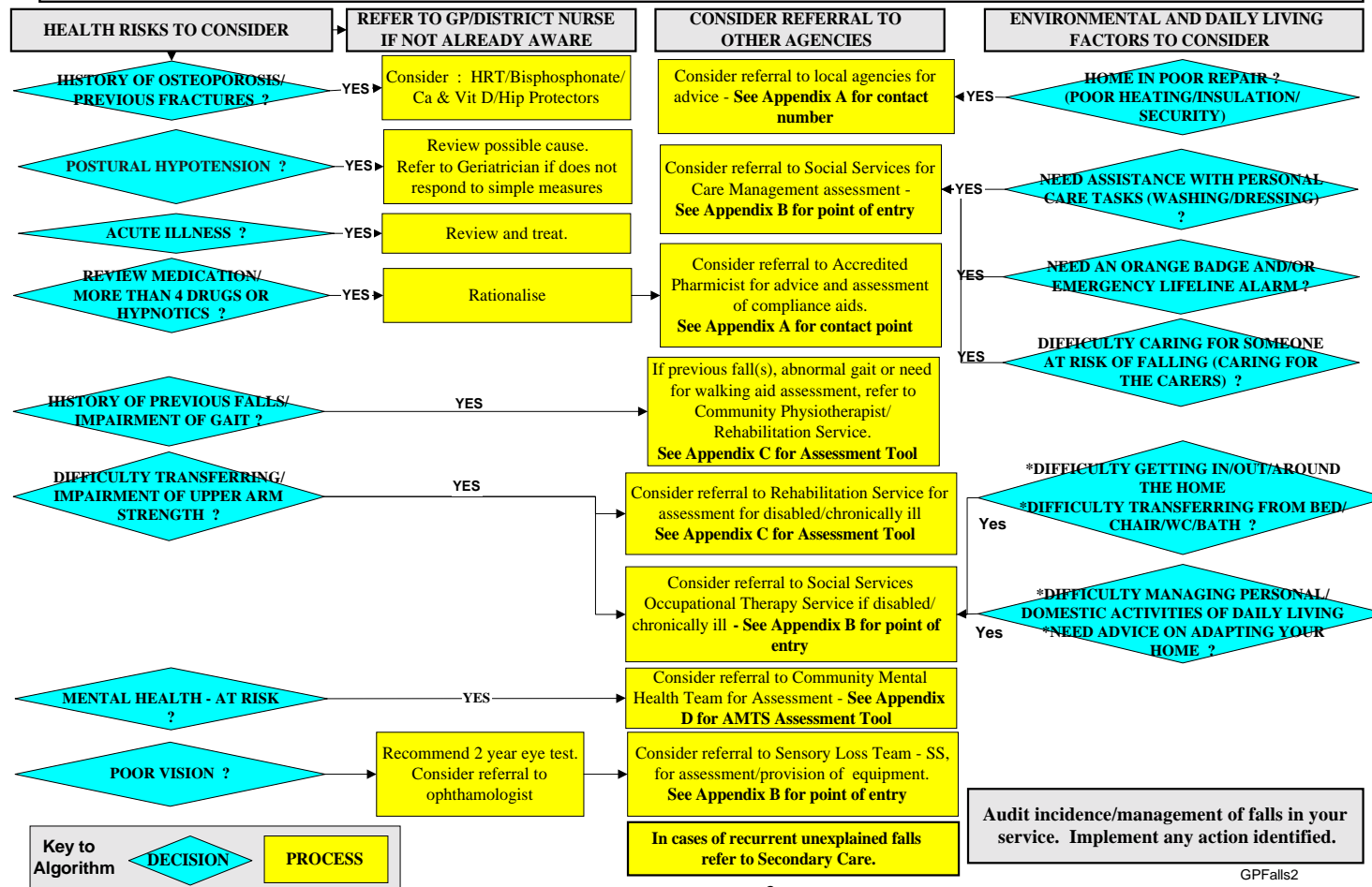
These Dorset-wide Falls Guidelines were developed by the Primary Prevention/Care Working Group. The Group was composed of representatives from primary and secondary health care, Social Services, voluntary agencies and the Community Pharmacist Team. All members of the working group gave their expertise and time enthusiastically and generously, without which these guidelines would not be available today.

The Group would like to thank the following:

- All the professionals who reviewed the draft Guidelines and submitted valuable information and comment;
- Dr Peter Overstall, Dr Jed Rowe, Consultant Physicians in Elderly Medicine and Dr John Stevens, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist and Clinical Effectiveness Lead for Poole Hospital NHS Trust for their valuable Peer Review of the Guidelines;
- Osteoporosis Dorset, Straken Limited and Robinson Healthcare Ltd for their support in the development of the Guidelines.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FALLS IN THE ELDERLY IN PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS

**REMEMBER - ANY CONTACT WITH 65+ - DISCUSS HEALTHY LIFESTYLE : DIET/EXERCISE/SMOKING/ALCOHOL/FOOTCARE/FOOTWEARE**



**Useful Addresses and Contact Numbers**

**Dorset-wide contact for assistance for home repairs, security, insulation etc. for older people.**

Help and Care  
The Pokesdown Centre  
896 Christchurch Road  
Bournemouth  
BH7 6DL  
TELEPHONE: 01202 432288

Community Pharmacist:

Contact the GP who will have a list of accredited pharmacists.

WanderGuard (UK) Ltd  
Clarendon Buildings  
London  
N15 1XL  
FREEPHONE 0500 500 667

**Supply Tabs Mobility Monitors - can alert staff of patients who are at risk when they need assistance.**

Sensor Care Systems Ltd  
Kirk Hammerton Hall  
York  
North Yorkshire  
YO5 8DA  
TELEPHONE 01423 331298

**Supply bed alarms**

Robinson Healthcare  
Waterside  
Walton  
Chesterfield  
S40 1YF  
TELEPHONE 01246 220022  
**Supply Safehip protectors (Validated)**

Alert Care  
Ellen Young  
PO Box 3604  
Sturminster Newton  
DT10 2XG  
TELEPHONE 01258 817328  
**Supply Ambularm**

Contd.....

Age Concern Aid Call  
Freepost (Ex 2356)  
Newton Abbot  
Devon  
TQ13 7BR  
TELEPHONE: 0345 413103

**Produce Falls leaflets**

Health Education Authority's Older People Programme  
TELEPHONE: 0171 413 2036

**To obtain the leaflet 'Avoiding slips, trips and broken hips'.**

POINT OF ENTRY FOR:

Referral to Social Services for Occupational Therapy  
and/or Care Management Assessment.

BOURNEMOUTH SOCIAL SERVICES

9 Madeira Road  
BOURNEMOUTH  
Dorset, BH1 1QN

Telephone Number: (01202) 458000  
Facsimile Number: (01202) 458010

POOLE SOCIAL SERVICES

Adult Social Services (Commissioning)  
Help Desk, Civic Centre Annexe  
Park Road  
POOLE  
Dorset, BH15 2RT

Telephone Number: (01202) 633870/69/68  
Facsimile Number: (01202) 633634

DORSET SOCIAL SERVICES

Dorchester Office

Acland Road  
DORCHESTER  
Dorset, DT1 1SH

Telephone Number: (01305) 251414  
Minicom Number: (01305) 251596

Weymouth & Portland Office

Cumberland Drive  
Granby Estate  
WEYMOUTH  
Dorset, DT4 9TB

Telephone Number: (01305) 760139

Bridport Office

The Grove  
Rax Lane  
BRIDPORT  
Dorset, DT6 3JL

Telephone Number: (01308) 422234

Sherborne Office

The Sheilings  
The Avenue  
SHERBORNE  
Dorset, DT9 3AJ

Telephone Number: (01935) 814104/5

North Dorset Office

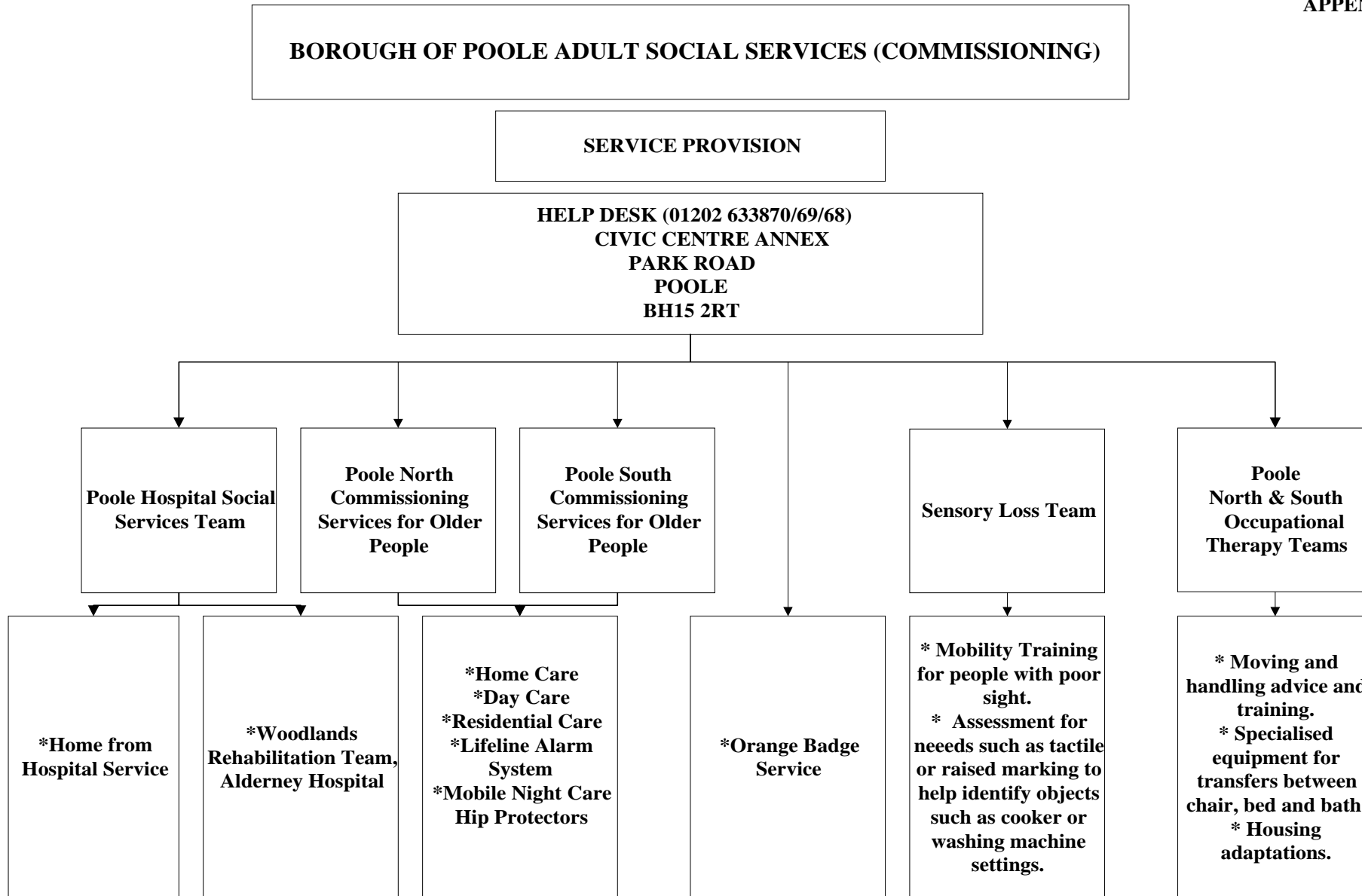
Bath Road  
STURMINSTER NEWTON  
Dorset, DT10 1DR

Telephone Number: (01258) 472652

Purbeck Office

Bonnets Lane  
WAREHAM  
Dorset, BH20 4BH

Telephone Number: (01929) 553456



**HOME ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR REFERRAL TO PHYSIOTHERAPY/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES IN PRIMARY CARE SETTINGS**

**TICK BOXES AND SCORE AS APPROPRIATE:**

**NB. Any ‘YES’ indicates possible risk of fall or further fall.**

- |    |  |            |                          |           |                          |
|----|--|------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Has there been a deterioration in the person’s mobility level over the past month? | <b>YES</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>NO</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Has there been an acute illness during this period?                                | <b>YES</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>NO</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Has the person fallen within the last 12 months                                    | <b>YES</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>NO</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Is the person’s footwear suitable?   | <b>YES</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>NO</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

-----  
**A low score may be cause for concern.**

**If there is a decrease of 4 or more between the total scores of previous and current mobility then the person should be referred to either OT or PT via local referral arrangements for assessment.**

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>GAIT</b>	<b>PREVIOUS MOBILITY SCORE</b>	<b>CURRENT MOBILITY SCORE</b>
3	Independent (including use of 1 stick)		
2	Independent with frame or similar walking aid		
1	Mobile with walking aid but unsafe turning (needs occasional supervision)		
0	Needs physical help to walk or constant supervision		
	<b>TRANSFERS Bed ↔ Chair ↔ Toilet</b>		
3	Independent		
2	Needs 1 to help		
1	Needs 2 to help		
0	Hoist needed		
	<b>Bed Mobility - Getting into Bed</b>		
3	Independent		
2	Needs 1 to help		
1	Needs 2 to help		
0	Hoist needed		
	<b>Bed Mobility - Getting out of Bed</b>		
3	Independent		
2	Needs 1 to help		
1	Needs 2 to help		
0	Hoist needed		
	<b>TOTAL</b>		

**Please return with referral form to relevant service**

**Name**.....

**Title**.....

FallsassessmentPC

**ABBREVIATED MENTAL TEST SCORE  
FOR REFERRAL TO  
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS**

**PLEASE TICK**

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| DOB                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| YEAR                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| AGE                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TIME (to nearest hour)         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RECALL (e.g. 42 West Street)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| REIGNING MONARCH               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RECOGNITION OF TWO PEOPLE      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PLACE                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DATE OF START OF WW1           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COUNTING BACKWARDS FROM 20 – 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

➤ **7/10 = NORMAL**

## REFERENCES

## Grading of evidence in brackets

**I = evidence from well designed, randomised controlled trials (RCTs), meta analyses or systematic reviews of RCTs**

**II = Evidence from prospective studies (non-randomised controlled trials or good observational studies)**

**III = Evidence obtained from retrospective and cross-sectional studies**

**IV = Evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experience of respected authorities**

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Information on an independent learning pack on reducing the risk of falls by elderly people in hospitals is available from Joy Warren, Ward Sister, Barnes Ward, Dorset County Hospital Dorchester DT1 2JY, Tel:01305 254771.