



## **Information sheet for participants (Volunteers)-Version no.2**

**Project title: Improving balance in community-dwelling elders using trained volunteers within local communities- A feasibility study.**

### **Why are we doing this project?**

According to the Age UK (2010) report, every minute, six people over 65 years or older have a fall. This results in fractures, disability, isolation and institutionalisation in a majority of those who have had a fall. However, falls can be prevented or reduced by improving strength, balance and endurance by doing specific exercises. There are limited resources in the NHS to provide services to improve balance and reduce falls to everyone above 65 years living in the community. Therefore, we need initiatives using local resources to improve this situation.

We intend to set up a group activity to get people who are at the risk of falling to improve their balance in your local community such as your local church. This group activity will include balance education, group exercises once a week for 4 weeks, home exercises, individual balance assessments and advice.

Please read the following material and decide if you would like to participate as a volunteer to help run the classes. You will be given training and will shadow physiotherapists before you can start leading this programme. You can discuss the information with others and the persons carrying out the project before you agree to take part.

### **Who is doing the work?**

This is a project done by academics from the University of Birmingham in collaboration with qualified physiotherapists who live locally. The contact details of personnel involved have been listed at the end of this information sheet.

### **Why are you being approached?**

You have been approached since you are a parishioner in this church and are a healthy adult. It is important to note that participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to support. If you think you can give about two hours per week for 5 weeks to be trained in assessing balance problems and supervising exercises for elderly people who will participate in exercise classes, please consider participation. Even if you decide to take part you will have the right to change your mind within four weeks of participation and may withdraw your data without giving any reason. If you decide to withdraw your data

after the 4 week deadline, unfortunately it cannot be done as your data would've been integrated within the whole data set and analysed by the fifth week.

### **What happens if you decide to participate?**

If you decide to take part in the study you will be asked to sign consent forms by one of the persons conducting the project. The programme will be run by qualified therapists. The entire programme will run for 5 weeks on Saturday afternoons in the local church hall or village hall.

You will be trained by the qualified physiotherapists about the basic balance mechanisms how to assess balance, how to do basic group exercises and advice on safety at home. In the first week you will shadow physiotherapists who will do some assessments on elders participating in the programme. You will be taught to assess balance, ability to do certain daily activities, confidence regarding their balance, socialisation and quality of life. This will involve some simple questionnaires and physical tests that a physiotherapist would normally carry out to test people's balance. In the first week, assessment will be done and there will also be a talk about falls, risk factors and how to improve balance which you will observe and learn to deliver. In the following four weeks you will be observing and helping group exercises for 45 mins to help improve balance and strength in elders once a week. This will happen in two sets of elders; the second set will start after two months. The elders will be given home exercises to do at home during the 4 weeks of supervised exercises. You will be taught to monitor their exercise diaries and discuss issues. After 4 weeks of group exercises and home exercises elders will be reassessed and you can observe them being re-assessed and start helping with assessments at this point.

While you are being trained and delivering the programme, the physiotherapists will observe your skills and give you individualised feedback privately to help you develop your skills and your confidence.

There will be a group discussion following this on a day convenient to the members of the group to let us know about the long-term feasibility, usefulness of the programme and how to improve it for the future. Please provide your phone number on the consent form if you have ticked yes for the group discussion. This will be helpful to communicate the arrangements about the groups. This focus group will take about 40-60 minutes.

### **Are there any issues of confidentiality?**

The consent forms will have your name and contact details. These will be stored safely in locked cabinets. All information from focus group will be made anonymous and stored securely in password protected laptops and hard copies will be stored in filing cabinets in the University office. All personal data will be made anonymous using codes. Data will not be shared with any person other than those involved in the project. Reports for the University and published data will not include your personal details.

### **Why should I participate?**

Your participation is highly valued since it will help us to identify whether local programs for improving balance using volunteers is helpful to reduce risk of falling in elders. The information gathered will be used to write to councils recommending to set up more programs like this to improve health of elders in the community. It is possible that you will personally benefit by improving your knowledge about falls and being able to help elders in the future to improve their balance and independent living.

### **Are there any risks?**

There are no major risks associated with joining a balance improvement program. However, testing and training for balance has an inherent risk of falls as elders will be challenging their current level of balance. But therapists will be beside you while doing the tests and exercises and will support you during these activities and help you develop knowledge and confidence in this safety aspect.

### **What happens at the end of the study?**

The tests and assessments will be analysed and written up as a report for the church leaders and participants. These findings will then be published in journals and presented to professionals at conferences. The findings will also be written up as reports for the council to recommend them to set up similar programs for the long term. Anonymised data from this project will be used to support other similar work in the field of health.

### **Thank you**

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet and considering participation.

### **Contacts for further information**

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