

# A study exploring a new walking frame for older people living in their own homes.

<b>Submission date</b> 18/09/2024	<b>Recruitment status</b> Recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 20/09/2024	<b>Overall study status</b> Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 10/06/2025	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

The study is focused on evaluating a new indoor walking frame designed for older adults. Walking frames have been used for many years to help people who are unsteady or have difficulty walking, but the traditional frame has some limitations. This new frame aims to address common issues, such as difficulty moving on carpets or navigating small spaces in homes. The primary goal of the study is to explore whether this new walking frame is feasible for use in a larger trial, and to gather feedback from users about its acceptability and potential benefits. The study will also look at whether using the frame increases the activity levels of participants.

### Who can participate?

The study is open to adults aged 65 or older who have been using a traditional walking frame for over a year and live in their own homes. Participants must be able to provide informed consent and be physically capable of safely using the new walking frame. People who live in care homes, are non-weight-bearing, or have vision problems that cannot be corrected with glasses are excluded from the study.

### What does the study involve?

Participants will use the new walking frame for an 8-week period. Physiotherapists will provide training on how to use the frame safely. Participants' activity levels will be tracked both before and after using the frame using simple devices such as accelerometers. Throughout the study, feedback will be collected through interviews and follow-up phone calls. Physiotherapists involved in the study will also provide their feedback through focus groups. The study will not only look at the physical impact of using the new frame but also participants' overall experience and its usability in a home setting.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The possible benefits include improved mobility, greater independence, and potentially a reduction in falls due to better use of the walking frame. However, as with any walking aid, there are risks involved, such as the chance of falls or injury while using the frame at home without immediate medical assistance. Participants will be fully informed of the risks before joining the study.

Where is the study run from?

The study is being conducted by the University of Exeter, primarily in participants' own homes. Physiotherapists will deliver the intervention, and the study's management is based at the University of Exeter.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2024 to October 2026

Who is funding the study?

The study is funded by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Charitable Trust (CSPCT), which supports research that can improve physiotherapy care and outcomes.

Who is the main contact?

The Chief Investigator for the study is Dr. Abi Hall, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Exeter. You can contact her via email at [a.hall4@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:a.hall4@exeter.ac.uk)

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Abi Hall

### Contact details

University of Exeter, Heavitree Road

Exeter

United Kingdom

EX1 2LU

-

[a.hall4@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:a.hall4@exeter.ac.uk)

## Additional identifiers

### EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

### IRAS number

333393

### ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

### Secondary identifying numbers

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Charitable Trust Grant Codes: PRF-23A-POD11; CPMS 58368

## Study information

## **Scientific Title**

A new, novel walking frame for older adults in community settings – a single-arm feasibility study with embedded process evaluation and health economic analysis

## **Acronym**

FORWARD

## **Study objectives**

The primary objectives of this feasibility study will be to explore feasibility of trial processes (e. g., recruitment, data collection) and assess the acceptability of the walking frame which would be used in a subsequent large multi-centre randomised controlled trial (RCT). We will also estimate the potential effectiveness of using the novel walking frame.

The aim of the future RCT would be to determine the effect of the intervention on activity levels, mobility and the cost effectiveness compared to standard care.

Thus, for this feasibility study the objectives will be as follows:

Primary objectives will be to:

- determine the feasibility of data collection
- explore adherence to using the new walking frame
- determine recruitment rates and time to recruit participants
- explore the eligibility of potential recruits
- explore any adverse events of using the frame

Secondary objectives:

- Explore the acceptability and feasibility of using the new walking frame;
  - from the perspective of the patient
  - the experiences of the carer (if present)
- Explore the thoughts and beliefs of the physiotherapist
- Estimate the standard deviation of continuous outcomes to help inform the sample size calculation for a subsequent definitive RCT of intervention effectiveness
- Estimate the follow-up rate
- Explore changes in activity levels using the new walking frame
- Explore whether the frame results in any change in health and social care service utilisation

## **Ethics approval required**

Ethics approval required

## **Ethics approval(s)**

Approved 11/09/2024, Frenchay REC (Ground Floor, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6PN, United Kingdom; +44 207 1048106; frenchay.rec@hra.nhs.uk), ref: 24/SW/0103

## **Study design**

Single-arm non-randomized feasibility study with embedded process evaluation and health economic analysis

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Secondary study design**

Non randomised study

**Study setting(s)**

Other

**Study type(s)**

Treatment

**Participant information sheet**

See outputs table

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Exploring a new walking frame for older people living in their own homes

**Interventions**

We will train physiotherapists in how to use the frame and teach older people to use it. We will then ask them to provide the walking frame to the older person and ensure they are safe to use it. We will collect data such as how active the person is before using the frame and then whether they are more active using this new frame. We will also collect data about how their activity levels affect their quality of life and the social and health care costs.

We will talk to the older people and physiotherapists to explore what they think about the frame - what is good and what could be improved.

We will give the older person 8 weeks to use the frame, after which they are able to keep the frame if they would like to.

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome measure**

Feasibility measured using ... at ...

**Secondary outcome measures**

1. Demographic data collected will include age, sex, ethnicity, highest education level, marital status, Index of Multiple Deprivation (from postcode), Clinical Frailty Scale, Health and social care service utilization
2. Clinical outcome measures will be taken at baseline and 8 weeks after being given the frame
  - 2.1. Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB)
  - 2.2. EQ-5D-5L
  - 2.3. Timed up and Go
  - 2.4. Goal Attainment Scale
  - 2.5. General self-efficacy framework
3. The Zarit Burden Interview will be undertaken with carers (if present) at baseline and 8 weeks
4. Activity tracking will be undertaken for 1 week prior to the provision of the new walking frame. This will include activity tracking of the person and of the walking frame. We will use simple accelerometers to measure the activity in terms of distance moved, time moving as well as speed of movement. We will also collect data about any other walking aids that they use. A further 1 week of activity tracking will be undertaken at the end of the intervention period

**Overall study start date**

01/08/2024

**Completion date**

01/10/2026

# Eligibility

## Key inclusion criteria

Patient participants who:

1. Live at home in a suitable environment to use a frame
2. Have the capacity to provide informed consent to take part in the study and use the frame safely
3. Understand and converse in English
4. Use a traditional frame for >1 year
5. Are over the age of 65 years old

Therapist participants who:

1. Have at least a year of experience working as a physiotherapist in the community
2. Have delivered the intervention to at least 1 participant, for the qualitative data collection

## Participant type(s)

Patient, Health professional

## Age group

Senior

## Lower age limit

65 Years

## Sex

Both

## Target number of participants

Planned Sample Size: 30; UK Sample Size: 30

## Key exclusion criteria

Patient participants who are:

1. Living in care homes
2. Non-weight bearing
3. Experiencing visual disorders not correctable by glasses

Therapist participants who have:

1. No experience working in community settings

## Date of first enrolment

01/11/2024

## Date of final enrolment

30/09/2025

# Locations

## Countries of recruitment

England

United Kingdom

### **Study participating centre**

-

Royal Devon University NHS Ft  
Barrack Road  
Exeter  
United Kingdom  
EX2 5DW

## **Sponsor information**

### **Organisation**

University of Exeter

### **Sponsor details**

Stocker Road  
Exeter  
England  
United Kingdom  
EX4 4PY  
+44 1392726621  
res-sponsor@exeter.ac.uk

### **Sponsor type**

University/education

### **Website**

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/>

### **ROR**

<https://ror.org/03yghzc09>

## **Funder(s)**

### **Funder type**

Charity

### **Funder Name**

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Charitable Trust

### **Alternative Name(s)**

CSP Charitable Trust, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Charitable Trust, The CSP Charitable Trust, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, CSPCT

**Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

**Location**

United Kingdom

**Results and Publications**

**Publication and dissemination plan**

The study results are planned to be published in a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal, following the completion of the study. The research team will disseminate the findings widely through academic journals, conferences, and other platforms. Additionally, results will be shared on the University of Exeter’s open access repository, Open Research Exeter (ORE). This will ensure that the study data is available for further research and public access. The final study report, anonymised participant-level dataset, and statistical code for generating the results will be prepared after data analysis is complete.

**Intention to publish date**

31/12/2026

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The current data sharing plans for this study are unknown and will be available at a later date.

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	version 1.2	10/09/2024	20/09/2024	No	Yes