Managing falls in your residents

Falling should not be seen as an inevitable part of ageing. In the care home population, residents’ falls contribute to a high incidence of accident reports.

There are a number of things that can be done to help residents reduce their risks of falling.

1. Residents should be encouraged to keep as active and independent as possible in order to maintain a good quality of life.

Limiting physical activity or exercise reduces muscle strength, affects balance and leads to dependency, which in turn leads to an increase in the risk of falling.

1. Maintaining independence with mobility and transfers from chair, bed or toilet, and other activities of daily living can help reduce the risk of your residents falling.

Independence with every day activities or help to maintain or regain confidence with a resident’s mobility when using walking aids should be encouraged.

1. Regular gentle exercise designed to improve strength and balance has shown to have a significant benefit on a resident’s mobility and independence. Social events such as tea dances help promote mobility in a gentle and enjoyable way.

Targeted exercises given by trained professionals can be incorporated into a resident’s daily routine in order to maximise their independence and confidence with mobilising and reduce the risk of falls.

The reasons why a resident may fall are multifactorial and a fall should not be looked at in isolation.

There is not always a medical reason for why a resident should fall as well as there is not always a physical reason for a resident’s fall. There may be an environmental factor associated with the risk of a resident falling.

There is often a combination of medical, physical and environmental.

Using a falls assessment tool and regularly reviewing residents can help to identify factors putting them at risk of falling. If you are able to identify the risks, you will be in a better position to minimise those risks.