

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 March 2018 in Brampton Community Centre. The meeting took place after lunch in the community café. Again there was an encouraging attendance: 27 people attended the meeting and there were 2 apologies.

The Chair, Carol Saunders, welcomed members and introduced the guest speaker, Sara Bradley. Her role as Community Falls Prevention Officer with Age UK is part of the [Up and About Campaign](#).

Mrs Bradley told us the importance of preventing the first fall; once you have had a fall, another is more likely. A large survey of older people (age 50+) showed that nearly everyone underestimated their risk. She gave the example of TV celebrity Simon Cowell who, at age 58, had fallen badly at home. Public Health England suggest that 50% of people over the age of 80 are likely to have a fall. In one year 3 million visits to A and E are following a fall - this equates to around 2000 visits in Cumbria - resulting in huge costs to the health service. In about 5% of these cases the patient can't then return home. A fall may lead to loss of confidence and loss of mobility which in turn can cause isolation and depression.

Many falls are preventable. Mrs Bradley highlighted some of the risks, giving examples from her own experience, and outlined some of the many steps we can take to reduce them:

The importance of your senses: making the best of your eyesight - regular eye-tests (home visits can be arranged), keeping your spectacles in good repair.

Eating healthily, making sure that medication is reviewed regularly - local pharmacists are happy to help - and perhaps limiting alcohol intake if this poses a risk.

Taking care of your feet and having suitable footwear, including slippers with good soles and which provide support (not mules).

Reducing the risk from rugs, worn carpets, clutter on stairs; not standing on a chair; having good lighting, hand rails on both sides of the stairs.

Mrs Bradley stressed the importance of always wearing your community alarm, if you have one; several forum members gave tips about this based on their experiences. Another key message was the importance of keeping active and we were shown six simple exercises suitable even for those less able to get out and about.

Several leaflets about the services Age UK provide and a promotional cloth bag were available to take away.

More advice is available on the Age UK website:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/fitness/falls-prevention/> and a sheet with the six exercises demonstrated in the talk is available on our website: <https://50plusforum.bramptoncumbria.uk/docs/2018Mar-FallsPreventionExercises.pdf>

[Stagecoach bus company](#) has [journey assistance cards](#) to advise drivers of problems you may have.

Ann Oswin thanked Mrs Bradley for her talk which had provided useful advice.

After the meeting refreshments were available in the café.

The next 50+ Forum meeting, the AGM, is on Tuesday 8th May 2018.