Falls

Fear of falling contributes to social isolation, which both reduces the quality of many older people lives, and increases the need for care and support services. However, falling is not an inevitable part of ageing. The risks of falling, sustaining injury following a fall and of being admitted to hospital following an injury, can all be reduced.

Summary points

- In 2021/22 there were 1,610 emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over in Bristol.
- The Bristol rate of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over in 2021/22 was 2,573 per 100,000 population, significantly higher than England average of 2,099 per 100,000.
- Southville ward had the highest rate of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over in the 3 year period of 2019/20 – 2021/22.
- There were 375 emergency hospital admissions for hip fracture in people aged 65 and over in 2021/22 in Bristol, a rate of 533 per 100,000 population. This is slightly lower than the England average of 551 per 100,000.

Emergency admissions for fall-related injuries

Bristol's rate of emergency admission to hospital for injuries due to falls among people aged 65 and over (2,573 per 100,000 population) is significantly higher than the England average (Figure 1).

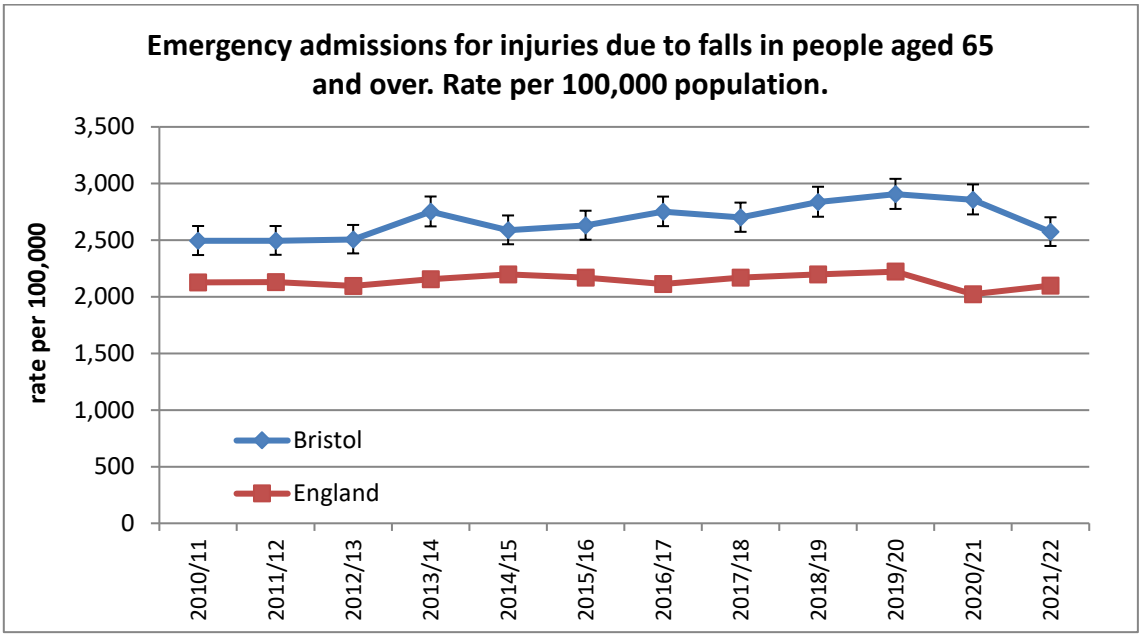

Figure 1: Hospital admissions from injuries due to falls (65+) via Public Health Outcomes Framework, July 2023.

During 2021/22 there were 1,610 emergency admissions to hospital with an injury due to a fall among people aged 65 and over. 64% (1,030) of those were people aged 80 and older.

The rate of emergency falls admissions in that age group was 6,223 per 100,000 population in 2021/22, statistically significantly higher that England average. Since 2011/12 the rate among over 80s in Bristol has been consistently higher than England average (Figure 2)

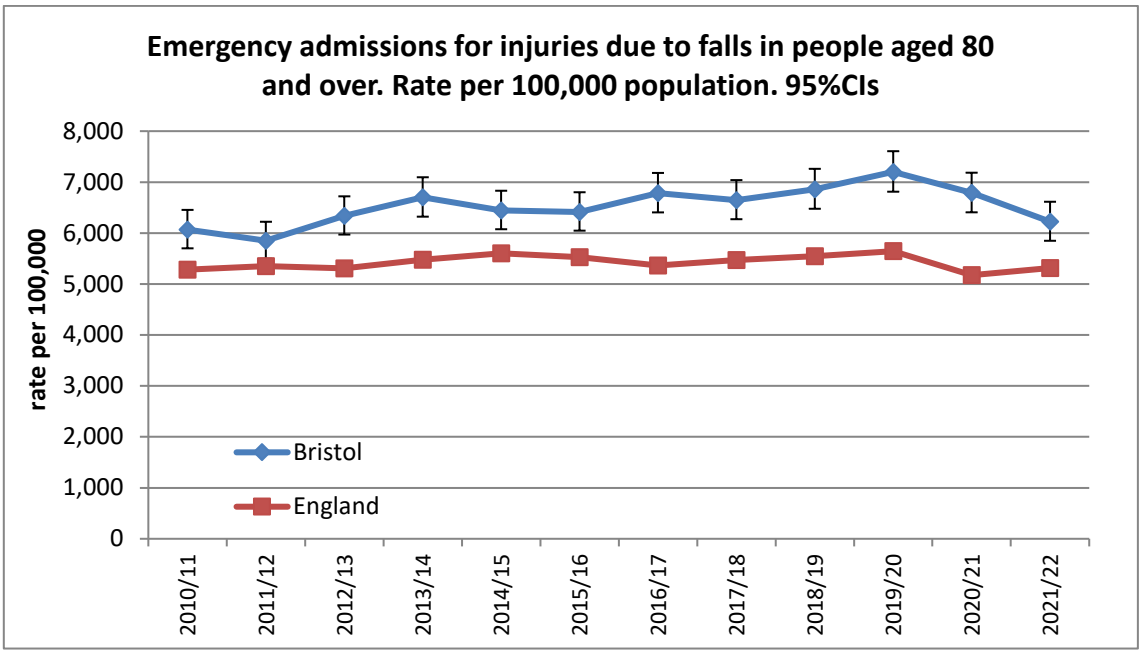

Figure 2: Hospital admissions from injuries due to falls (80+) via Public Health Outcomes Framework, July 2023.

Almost two thirds (65%) of falls-related admissions (aged 65+) are among females. In 2021/22 falls admissions rates among females have decreased slightly (Figure 3), but they still remain significantly higher than the England average.

Among males there has been a statistically significant increase in falls admissions rates between 2010/11 and 2018/19 : from 1,995 to 2,734 per 100,000 (37% increase) (Figure 3). In 2021/22 the rates have fallen by 12% comparing to the previous year. The rates among men are consistently higher than the England average (Figure 4).

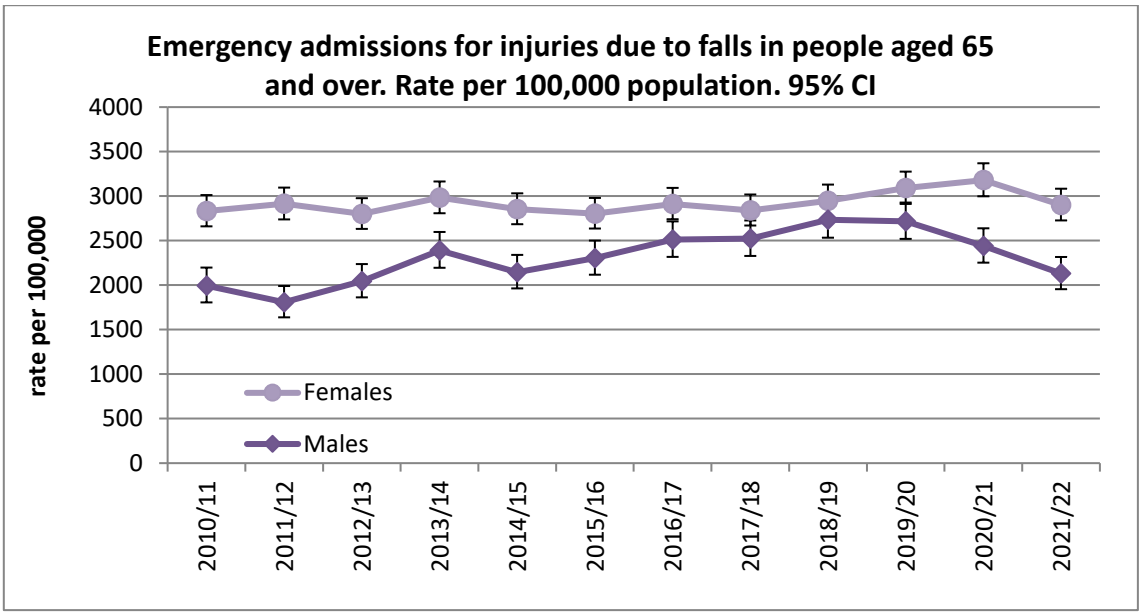

Figure 3: Hospital admissions from injuries due to falls (65+) via Public Health Outcomes Framework, July 2023.

Public Health Outcomes Indicator	Bristol		England	Significantly lower/higher than England
	Number	Rate / 100,000	Rate/ 100,000	
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over (persons)	1,610	2,573	2,100	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over (Male)	555	2,130	1,750	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65 and over (Female)	1,055	2,901	2,360	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65-79 (Persons)	580	1,315	993	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65-79 (Male)	240	1,135	825	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 65-79 (Female)	340	1,480	1,143	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 80+ (Persons)	1,030	6,223	5,311	higher
Injuries due to falls in people aged 80+ (Male)	315	5,014	4,430	similar
Injuries due to falls in people aged 80+ (Female)	715	7,023	5,890	higher

Figure 4: Emergency hospital admissions from injuries due to falls (Public Health Outcomes Framework, July 2023)

Analysis of the 65+ falls admissions rates (crude rates per 10,000) by Bristol ward in the 3 year period 2019/20 to 2021/22 showed the highest rates were in Southville (crude rate 518 per 10,000 population 65+), Hartcliffe & Withywood (366) and Stockwood (357). Those rates are also statistically significantly higher than Bristol average of 294 per 10,000 population.

The lowest rates have been in Hotwells and Harbourside, Ashley and St George Troopers Hill – all significantly lower than Bristol average. See figure 5 for more details.

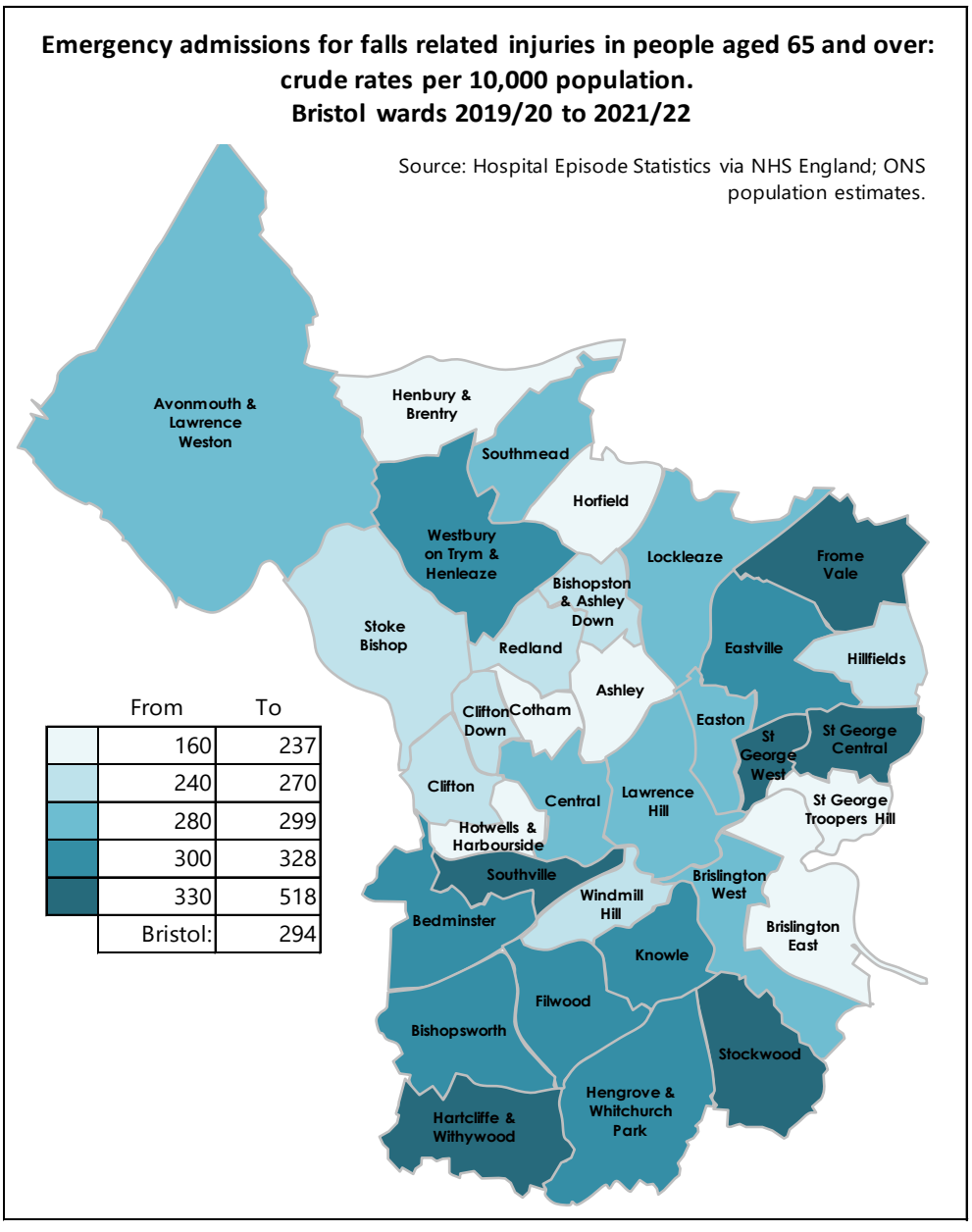

Figure 5: Hospital admissions from injuries due to falls. Source: Hospital Episode Statistics via NHS England, 2019/20 to 2021/22

Hip fracture

One of the most common injuries resulting in emergency admission following a fall is fractured neck of femur (or hip fracture). In 2021/22 Bristol's rate of hip fractures (533 per 100,000) was lower than in the previous year and similar to the national average of 551 per 100,000 (Figure 6). 335 people aged 65 & over in Bristol were admitted to hospital with hip fractures in 2021/22.

Females accounted for 68% of hip fracture admissions in 2021/22 (230 admissions), a rate of 631 admissions per 100,000 aged 65+. Males accounted for 32% of admissions (105 admissions), a rate of 414 per 100,000 aged 65+. Rates for both females and males are similar to the England average.

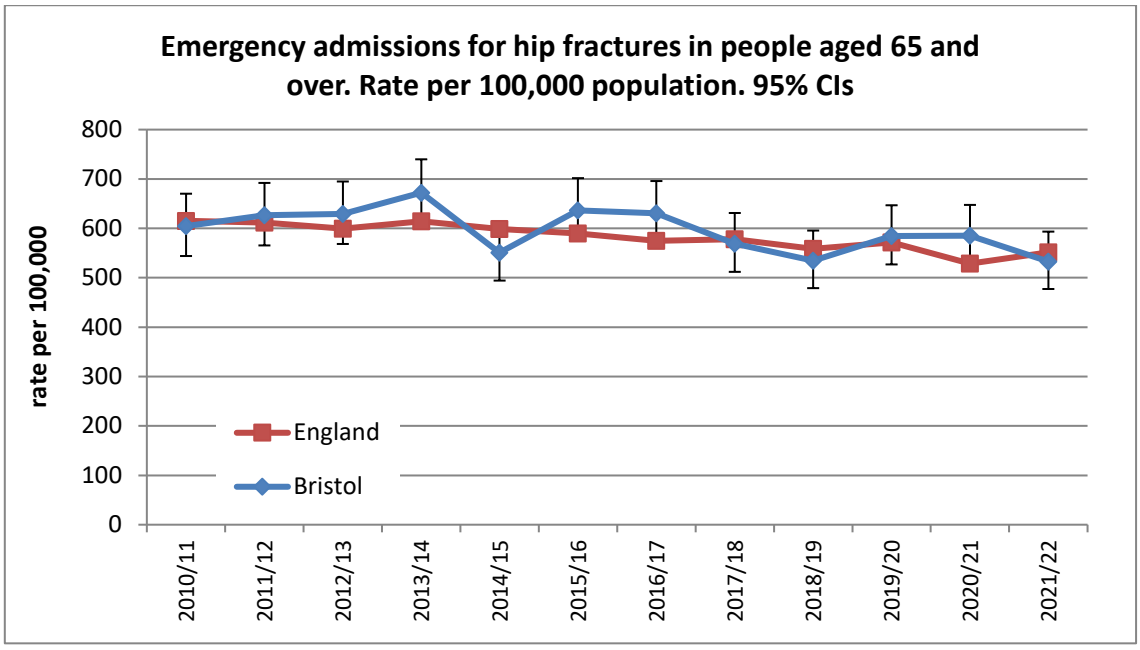

Figure 6: Hospital admissions due to hip fractures. Public Health Outcomes Framework, July 2023.

Further data / links / consultations:

- Public Health Outcomes Framework: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework
- Population estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
- Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) - NHS Digital
- Wider impacts of COVID-19 on physical activity, deconditioning and falls in older adults (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Covid-19 Impact:

Whilst it is too early to identify the full impact of the pandemic on falls prevalence it is likely that the pandemic requirements for the public to stay home will have had a negative impact upon the ability of many older people to maintain their levels of physical activity. This would have a negative impact upon the levels of strength and fitness that older and frail people were able to maintain. This 'deconditioning' is a known risk factor that increases the likelihood of future falls.

Date updated: July 2023 **Next Update Due:** April 2024