Nottingham's City Central PBC Group wanted to reduce the number of avoidable admissions to local hospitals for falls related fractures. They identified an opportunity to improve local osteoporosis and falls services in order to improve patient experience and outcomes and realise projected productivity and efficiency savings in line with QIPP (quality, innovation, productivity and prevention). To do this, they engaged NHS partners and the pharmaceutical industry to work together in a Joint Working Agreement.

The implementation of the Joint Working Project is being overseen by a dedicated Steering Group of NHS and pharmaceutical industry partners, including GSK. Project implementation involves developing and implementing a case finding tool, improving risk registers and implementing existing pathways and protocols.

Key Performance Indicators
- Review of ≥ 90% of patients identified in the audit within the duration of the project.
- Increased adherence to the patient pathway and treatment algorithm.
- Improvement in data quality and recording.
- Reduction in overall secondary care utilisation for falls and osteoporosis.

Project Learns
- The importance of learning and reflecting on what has gone before. This is NHS Nottingham City's fourth Joint Working project, and learns from previous projects have informed the approach to this project, resulting in a smoother implementation.
- Appointing the right people to the Steering Group – it is critically important to have people who know and understand Joint Working and have the authority to act.
- Engage your partners early in the planning stage. This will ensure joint ownership of the project and commitment to project delivery.
- The importance of stakeholder engagement and communication planning. Every project needs to have a bespoke communication plan in place, which needs to be continually revisited. Engage stakeholders face to face where possible.
- Engaging stakeholders with a solution, rather than an idea is more likely to facilitate positive and constructive debate, which can then be used to inform the project going forwards.

Although it took time to reach a consensus on the scope of the project the lengthy engagement process was worth the investment as it now has full commitment and energy from all the partners, including GPs. There is an excitement around the potential for this project, and we are hopeful of taking the learning from it and changing practice on a wider scale."
The Challenge
Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of monthly resulting from injury in people aged above 75 in the UK. More than 400,000 older people in England attend A&E departments following a fall each year, and it is estimated that one older person dies approximately every 4.5 hours as a result of a fall in the UK.

Osteoporosis is a condition characterised by a reduction in bone mass and density increases the risk of fracture when an older person falls. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men over 50 are affected by osteoporosis, and 50% of women experience an osteoporotic fracture by the time they reach the age of 75.

Locally, Nottingham has an increasingly ageing population, with nearly 13% of local people over the age of 65. Nottingham has the highest number of admissions caused by a fall for those aged above 75 in comparison to the rest of the East Midlands with an annual spend of around £6 million.

Nottingham’s City Central PBC Group identified the opportunity to improve local services and adopt a strategy of early identification and intervention, the opportunity to improve local services and adopt Nottingham’s City Central PBC Group identified £6 million.

What I found out by working on the Better Balance Better Bones project is that a gulf exists between primary and secondary care, and that pharmaceutical companies are able to provide a bridge. There is now even greater need to work together.

Aamer Ali, Consultant Physician Health Care for Older People

The Objectives
1. To reduce overall secondary care utilisation for falls and osteoporosis.
2. To identify patients who have experienced a fall, and ensure they receive appropriate assessment and support / clinical management to reduce risk of further falls and / or fractures.
3. To identify patients within primary care who have developed or are at risk of developing osteoporosis and develop detailed management plans.

The Solution
To address this challenge, a Joint Working Agreement has been initiated between NHS Nottingham City and three pharmaceutical companies: GlaxoSmithKline UK, ProStrakan Ltd and Shire Pharmaceuticals. The original financial budget for the project was £60k, split 50:50 between the NHS and pharmaceutical industry. The NHS has since increased their contribution by 18k to fund additional support for the project. This financial investment is in addition to the skills, resources and secondary care, and pharmaceuticals. The original financial budget for the project was £60k, split 50:50 between the NHS and pharmaceutical industry. The NHS has since increased their contribution by 18k to fund additional support for the project. This financial investment is in addition to the tools, resources and pharmaceutical companies, or that pharmaceutical companies are able to provide a bridge. There is now even greater need to work together.

Joint Working gives extra resources to a project in terms of manpower, skills, knowledge, problem-solving and know-how. Particular areas of expertise that have been useful have been around marketing, communication, networks and use of tools.

Shirley Smith, Assistant Director of Commissioning for Community Services.