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**FAULTY PAVEMENTS FLOOR 2.5 MILLION OLDER PEOPLE, LEAVING  
NEARLY HALF REQUIRING MEDICAL ATTENTION**

Help the Aged is calling on local authorities to improve paving in their areas, following new research to support the Charity's third **National Falls Awareness Day** on **26<sup>th</sup> June 2007**. The research shows that 2.5 million (26%) people aged over 65 in the UK have fallen to the ground due to damaged or uneven pavements.<sup>1</sup>

The research also found that 840,000, 33% of those who had fallen, had to visit the hospital and 846,000 (34%) their GP. 332,000 (13%) of those who fell, were afraid to leave their home in case they fell again and over 300,000 (12%) pursued the problem with their local council. The Charity is encouraging older people to challenge their local authority on the state of local paving with a Help the Aged pavement postcard, created as part of this year's National Falls Awareness Day.

The theme of this year's awareness day is 'Getting out and about'. The aim is to highlight potential hazards that can cause falls and how to avoid them to give older people the confidence to get out and about. Over 400 events are planned to take place across the UK to highlight falls prevention and the understanding that falls are not an inevitable part of ageing.

Other key findings include

- 5.5 million (56%) people aged over 65 go out of their way to avoid routes that may have faulty or damaged pavements.
- 4.4 million (46%) of over 65s have said that their life isn't as full or active as they would like it to be
- 959,000 (22% of those people) have said that better paving would help them to be more active.

For older people with mobility problems poor paving represents a significant barrier to leading an independent life. This is why Help the Aged is encouraging people to take

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Source: Spotlight survey by GfK/NOP for Help the Aged. 1095 interviews of older people (aged 65+) were conducted across the UK in February 2007.

action to improve the physical environment to prevent falls and keep active in later life in order to maintain health and independence.

Pamela Holmes, Healthy Ageing Manager for Help the Aged, said: "Dangerous paving is risking the lives of our older generations and stopping millions from leading independent and healthy lives. For many, once a fall has taken place, it limits normal day-to-day activities because of fear of a reoccurrence. This leads to isolation and a poor quality of life. And, as people become older falls are literally a matter of life or death as for over 75s falls are a leading cause of mortality."

The pavement postcard can be picked up from any of the hundreds of National Falls Awareness Day events that are taking place across the UK on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007. A full list of events is available at [www.helptheaged.org.uk/fallsday](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/fallsday). They can also be obtained from Help the Aged shops from July onwards or ordered by emailing [falls@helptheaged.org.uk](mailto:falls@helptheaged.org.uk). The postcards urge older people, their friends or family, and the general public to highlight an area of dangerous paving to their local street maintenance service.

The Charity is interested in capturing the experiences of older people who may have fallen as a result of faulty paving. Those who would like to share their story can email [falls@helptheaged.org.uk](mailto:falls@helptheaged.org.uk).

Supporters of National Falls Awareness Day who would like to raise funds to help the Charity carry out its vital work to help older people can perform an exhilarating sponsored skydive. Please contact the Help the Aged on **020 7239 1964** or visit [www.helptheaged.org.uk/events](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/events).

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editor**

1. Help the Aged has a number of exercise resources available to older people concerned about their risk of falling including a free advice leaflet called **Staying Steady**. For a free copy please call **020 7239 1845**. Advice leaflets can also be picked up from local Help the Aged shops or downloaded from the Help the Aged website: [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk). Help the Aged also produces an exercise DVD/video called

**Step to the Future.** Copies can be purchased through Help the Aged Home Shopping by phone, **0870 770 0441**, or online **[www.helptheaged.org.uk/homeshopping](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/homeshopping)**.

2. Help the Aged is the charity fighting to free disadvantaged older people in the UK and overseas from poverty, isolation and neglect. It campaigns to raise public awareness of the issues affecting older people and to bring about policy change. The charity delivers a range of services including information and advice, home support and help in difficult times that are supported by its fundraising activities and paid for services. Help the Aged also funds vital research into the health issues and experiences of older people to improve the quality of later life.