

Herts
**Sport &
Physical
Activity**
Partnership



Impact Case Study

British Judo: Judo for Safer Falling

In partnership with

BRITISH
JUDO



University of
Hertfordshire **UH**

Healthy
hub
Welwyn Hatfield



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Active Partnership Support	4
Pilot Success	5
NGB Collaboration	6
National Traction	7
National Recognition	8
International Conference	9
Further Publication	10

Featured in this report:



Introduction

With 24,000 falls and 68 deaths globally per hour, falling more safely is of paramount importance for wellbeing and reducing the costs on health and social care.

To support this issue, Professor Mike Callan of the University of Hertfordshire (UH) has developed a specially designed programme of judo-based exercises aimed at older adults. The programme focuses on techniques intended to reduce the risk of injury from falls by teaching participants how to fall and land more safely. The initiative supports the promotion of physical resilience and injury prevention among older populations.



Active Partnership Support

After hearing about the innovative programme, and seeing how closely it aligned with the **Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire programme (LLBiH)**, the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) connected with Mike to explore growing and delivering his programme across the county.

Through connections with the Local Authority, HSP brokered a connection with the **Welwyn Hatfield Healthy Hub**, who agreed to seed fund a pilot programme, delivered at the **University of Hertfordshire**.

In addition, HSP supported **Shizentai Judo Club** in securing **Sport England funding** through the LLBiH programme, enabling further **expansion** of the **Finding Your Feet** initiative across Hertfordshire.

“HSP’s support along with partners for the judo falling sessions is world leading, and has been shared with other nations.”

**Mike Callan –
Professor, University of Hertfordshire**

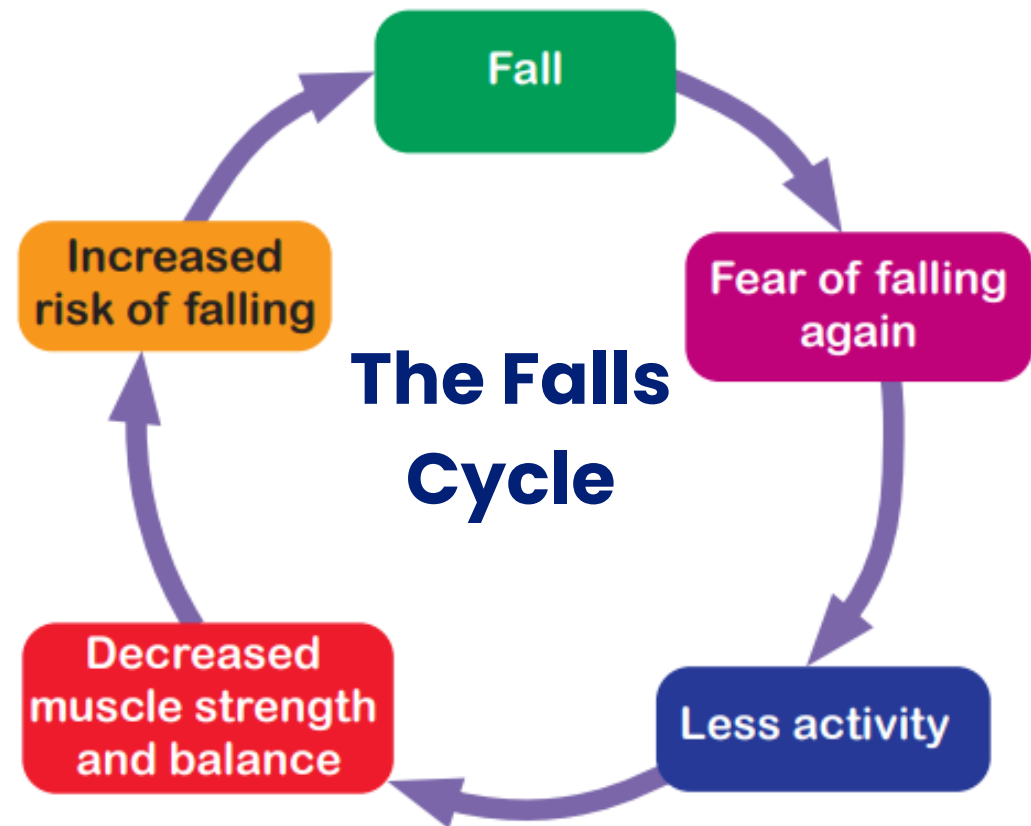


Pilot Success

The **free** to attend sessions were **delivered across nine months**, between October 2023 and June 2024.

The sessions attracted over **30 participants**, with initial analysis showing participants had a **reduced fear of falling by 17.4%** when completing just **8 sessions**.

By supporting participants to be less fearful of falling, the **programme encourages greater participation in day-to-day activities** which in turn increases mobility, strengthening muscles and improving balance, ultimately **reducing the likelihood and risk of falls**.



NGB Collaboration

As a result of the programme's success, **British Judo** reached out to HSP to collaborate in the activation of a new coach education intervention. Through this joint collaboration, and guided by Mike Callan's expertise, the first-ever, world exclusive '**Finding Your Feet**' coach education qualification was created with his colleague Dr Katrina McDonald, and its first delivery was as part of HSP's **Coach Education Week**.

Delivered at UH, **17 coaches** from **across the country** completed the qualification, learning the fundamentals of safer falling, providing them with the skills and knowledge to deliver the training within their communities.

Coach Education Week is a staple campaign of the Partnership's calendar. Having originated in 2008, the weeklong programme of courses, training and CPD has seen **over 10,000 coaches in its 17-year history**. The partnership forged between British Judo, UH and HSP has enabled 'Finding Your Feet' to become established across the county and continues to develop at a rapid pace with over 196 coaches now qualified.



National Traction

Showcasing the programme principles and plan through a **LLBiH Masterclass Webinar** in January 2024, Finding Your Feet caught attention from multiple **media agencies, local organisations**, and other **Active Partnerships**, all wanting to learn more about the programme and its benefits.

Looking to deliver programmes within their counties, **Active Cumbria** approved funding to deliver a **10-week pilot**, delivered by Mike Liptrot of Kendal Judo Club who had attended the coach education programme in Hertfordshire.

Similarly, **Active Surrey** provided a bid writing service for a local Judo Club, helping fund long term safer falling classes within the community. Just two examples of **Active Partnerships working closely with NGBs** to support the local community.

“ We’re bringing Finding Your Feet to Cumbria! I’m so excited and so glad you told me all about it. Thank you.

Clare Paling –
Active Cumbria, Older Adults Officer



National Recognition

Following the success of the programme, major media organisations began to express interest in covering the initiative. The increased attention was a direct result of the programme's effectiveness and relevance, with media outlets wanting to showcase its effectiveness in improving the lives of participants.

Media Coverage



Daily Mail Online



ITV News



ITV This Morning



BBC Con or Cure Feature



International Conference

In November 2023, the first “**International Conference Safe Falling for Older People through Judo**” was organised together by University of Hertfordshire JUDOS, Judospace and the IJF Academy, **hosted at Tokai University in Japan**.

The conference introduced the “**Judo4Balance**” and “**Strömqvist Bååthe**” Fall Competence Test” (SBFT), which is a measurable tool created by Karin Strömqvist Bååthe of Sweden.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
SAFE FALLING for OLDER PEOPLE through JUDO



Read more about the Conference [here](#)

12
Nations

42
Delegates

Representatives from: Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Croatia, Belgium, Japan, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and USA.



Further Publication

A key **legacy** of the conference is the publication of the “**Global Consensus Statement: How Can Judo Contribute to Reducing the Problem of Injurious Falls in Older Adults?**” – featured in *The Arts and Sciences of Judo* (Vol. 4, Issue 1). This highlights the role of judo, particularly ukemi, in **reducing the risk of falls among older adults**.

Falls are a significant health challenge for ageing populations. The consensus statement presents **best practice guidance** and **international recommendations** for the implementation of judo-based fall prevention programmes.

It emphasises the **role of collaboration** between judo federations, healthcare providers, and community organisations in effectively **scaling these interventions**—an approach that has already been integrated within the **UK physical activity system**.



Thank you to the partners, clubs and organisations who have supported the growth of the Judo for Safer Falling programme across the UK and Internationally.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this case study, please get in touch by emailing hspinfo@herts.ac.uk

Stay in touch by subscribing to our e-newsletter [here](#), visiting our website and joining our social media channels



www.sportinherts.org.uk



@sportinherts