



GET YOUR COMMUNITY WALKING

LIVING STREETS WALK LEADER MANUAL

Everything you need to know to help
people discover their local area and
become happier and healthier.



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ABOUT LIVING STREETS

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illness and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY IS A VERY REAL CONCERN, COSTING THE NHS UP TO £1BILLION EACH YEAR.

BUT WE BELIEVE THAT BY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO WALK EVERY DAY WE CAN HELP BRING THIS COST DOWN.

We encourage people to walk more. Together we can make a real, lasting difference to our health, our local environment and our wider community.

Progress starts here: one street, one school, one step at a time.



LEADING WALKS

Leading walks is a great way to share your own enthusiasm for getting out and about and your local knowledge. This guide and our one-day training course will help you to provide great led walks for your community or workplace that:

- Help people discover and make the best of their local area on foot
- Give people the confidence to walk on their own as well as in a group
- Welcome as many people as possible by keeping walks easy and accessible
- Involve local communities and organisations
- Show how easy, enjoyable and sociable walking can be
- Demonstrate all the benefits of walking
- Help make the case for improving the places people walk.

Our guide also tells you a few facts and figures about walking and all its benefits for you to share with your group.

We've focused on helping you lead short, easy walks in urban areas and close to where people live and work. The guide doesn't cover what you'd need to know if, for instance, you want to take groups into the wider countryside.

See also our walk leader checklist. It includes all the key points you need to remember.



LET'S WALK



FORWARD TOGETHER

THREE REASONS TO WALK



1

Walking is a great way to get active, and physical activity is good for us. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity like walking every week, in at least 10-minute bursts. Children should be active for at least 60 minutes, and preferably three hours, every day.

Keeping active is important for everyone, at every age. It's good for our hearts, lungs, muscles and bones. It helps us keep a healthy weight, and reduces the risk of a wide range of long term health conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis. It can also help in managing and recovering from some of these conditions.

2

And it's good for our mental health and wellbeing. It reduces stress, improves self-confidence, and reduces the risk of problems like depression and even Alzheimer's and dementia.



Walking is the perfect way to get and stay active. It's a natural, safe exercise almost everyone can do, anywhere and at any time, without any special training or equipment, and no need to pay a gym membership. For people who are very unfit it's a great way to get started slowly and build up gradually.

On top of this, walking is the most sustainable form of transport, a free and easy way of getting around. It doesn't produce polluting gases or contribute to global warming. A significant proportion of car trips are very short and if people walked these instead, congestion would be reduced.

3

Talking and walking go together. People who walk in groups often make new friends and enjoy improved social contact. But even when walking on your own, you're more likely to say hello and be sociable. Studies show people who live in areas with higher walking levels have more local friends and contacts. And more people out walking reduces crime and the fear of crime through the 'eyes on the street' effect.

Walking has economic benefits too. People on foot are likely to spend more locally, and making places better for walking can boost footfall and trading by up to 40%.

BUT WE DON'T WALK ENOUGH...

- Over a third of adults don't meet the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines
- Only a third of adults in the lowest income households meet the guidelines
- 80% of children don't meet the guidelines
- 50% of children are now driven to school
- We now walk 30% less than we did in the 1980s

This is bad news for both individuals and society. Health problems like the rise in obesity and type II diabetes are linked to low activity levels. The government estimates that in England alone, physical inactivity costs the NHS and the economy at least £7.4 billion a year.



Some groups are even less active than average.

Women are less active than men. People on low incomes are less active than better-off people, and also suffer proportionately more health problems. People from certain black and minority ethnic communities are also less active than average.

And people get less active as they get older – even though the benefits of staying active are more and more important the older you get.

There are many reasons why people don't walk. One is the physical environment, which often isn't as safe and attractive as it needs to be. This is something Living Streets also campaigns on.

But other reasons are more to do with habits, attitudes and lack of knowledge. Many people don't know about or think of good places to walk close to them. They're more likely to get to know their local area by car and public transport – often not the most attractive or direct routes on foot.

People often overestimate the time it would take to walk somewhere. And when they compare walking with other modes, they forget about congestion and delays that don't affect walking, and the fact that, unlike sitting in a traffic jam or a crowded bus or train, walking has positive benefits. So they conclude they don't have time to walk, even though, since active people live longer lives, they would be buying themselves more time by walking!

Living Streets' led walks help get over these barriers by:

- Showing people the way and helping them discover places to walk close by
- Introducing them to other people to walk with, and providing 'safety in numbers' where there are concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour
- Providing a timed and structured activity to aim for
- Showing walking is easy and enjoyable: many people are surprised at how far and how fast they walk.



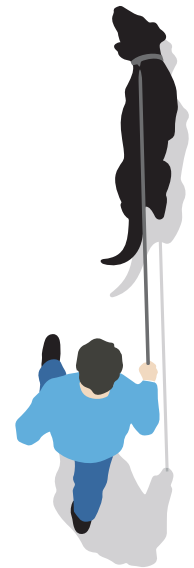
HELPING MAKE WALKING THE NORMAL THING TO DO IN A WORKPLACE OR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

As a Living Streets' walk leader, you'll be a powerful walking champion. So be prepared to tell people all the ways in which walking is good for them and good for communities. Find out about other walking opportunities in your area – for example the council might have walking maps, and other groups might be running led walks – and tell your groups about these where appropriate. And try to find out who to speak to at the local council about fixing problems on walks.

To find out more about the benefits of walking, visit livingstreets.org.uk.

WALKING HAS ITS BENEFITS

**REDUCE
STRESS**



**INCREASE
FITNESS**



**BURN CALORIES. SAVE YOUR PETROL MONEY.
ENERGISE THE KIDS. MAKE THE DOG'S DAY.
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT. BE SMUG
AT WORK. BLOW AWAY THE COBWEBS. GET
YOUR HEART PUMPING. REDUCE CONGESTION.
DISCOVER YOUR LOCAL AREA. FREE YOUR
BRAIN. SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HIGH STREET.**

WHAT MAKES A GOOD WALK LEADER?



QUALITIES OF A GOOD WALK LEADER

- Welcoming, friendly, sociable
- Good communicator, informative
- Aware of others, observant, sensitive
- Confident and knowledgeable, knows the route, knows own boundaries
- Competent at dealing with incidents
- Diplomatic but firm and decisive
- Well-organised, well-equipped
- Reliable and punctual
- Enthusiastic (but not overbearing)
- An ambassador for walking and Living Streets.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Part of being a good walk leader is knowing your own boundaries and looking after yourself.

- Follow best practice advice and use existing Living Streets resources
- Don't try to solve everything by yourself
- Know your limitations and don't push yourself to exceed them
- Do your best to be reliable, but don't force yourself to go out if there's a good reason: get someone to cover
- Follow the same advice you'd give the group (clothing, footwear, sun cream, water etc)

Remember too that your role is to lead a great walk. You're not there to be a social worker, or a carer, or a taxi service. If you take on too much, you won't be able to concentrate on the walking.

BEFORE THE WALK...

CHOOSING A ROUTE

The key to finding a great walking route is to think about the people you'll be leading on it. Ideally, consult with them about what sort of walk they'd like (though don't feel obliged to do everything they ask for). If you're working with community groups ask them what features they would like to include.

CONSIDER...

- **Who is it for?** Families? Workers at lunchtime? Older people? People with disabilities?
- **Where?** Local: workplace/community venue or a well-known central landmark or transport interchange.
- **Distance and terrain?** Short (30-90 minutes, 1-3 miles, 2-5 km), easy, accessible
- **Facilities?** Public transport? Parking? Toilets? Shelter? Refreshments? Picnic place? Seating?

CIRCULAR OR LINEAR?

Be practical about making the walk as easy as possible. In some places it's hard to devise completely accessible walks that are also attractive. If the area is hilly it may be difficult to find completely flat walks, but local people will be used to dealing with hills. Climbing is also good exercise. You can reduce the impact of hills in the way you run the walk, by slowing the pace and giving people plenty of time to catch up and catch their breath – though this will also increase the time taken to walk the route. Remember for some people walking downhill is at least as challenging as walking uphill.

You could also offer both really easy walks and some slightly more challenging ones, and 'grade' the walks for difficulty in your publicity. Or you could run a 'figure of eight' walk



with two short loops that start and finish at the same point: that way less energetic people can walk only one loop, while more energetic people can walk both.

If your group is based at a workplace or community venue, start the walks from there. If not, make sure they can be reached by public transport. And while we want to discourage most people from driving to walks, you might also need to think about parking when working with particular groups like people with disabilities.

Older people in particular are discouraged from going out because of the lack of public toilets. Make sure there are toilets at the start and end of the walk and preferably along the way too, particularly on longer walks. Shelter at the starting point is another useful feature, and places to sit along the way provide natural stopping places.

A circular route is a good way to keep things local, and essential if you're based at a workplace or community venue. But in areas with good public transport, linear routes that finish at a different place from where they started are an option worth considering too. Always finish at a public transport interchange, preferably with good service back to the start. Make sure the publicity is clear that this is a linear route and people will need to use public transport to return to the start.

INTERESTING AND ATTRACTIVE ROUTES

Look for the following features

- Local services and amenities
- Interesting buildings and views
- Green space and waterside
- History and heritage
- Street life
- Themes



Showing how local amenities like shops, GPs, stations and even post boxes are easily accessible on foot will help people understand how they can walk around their local area. And try to include 'surprises' and hidden gems on your routes, like tucked away green spaces, unusual buildings and unexpected short cuts: the things that people don't notice unless they're walking.

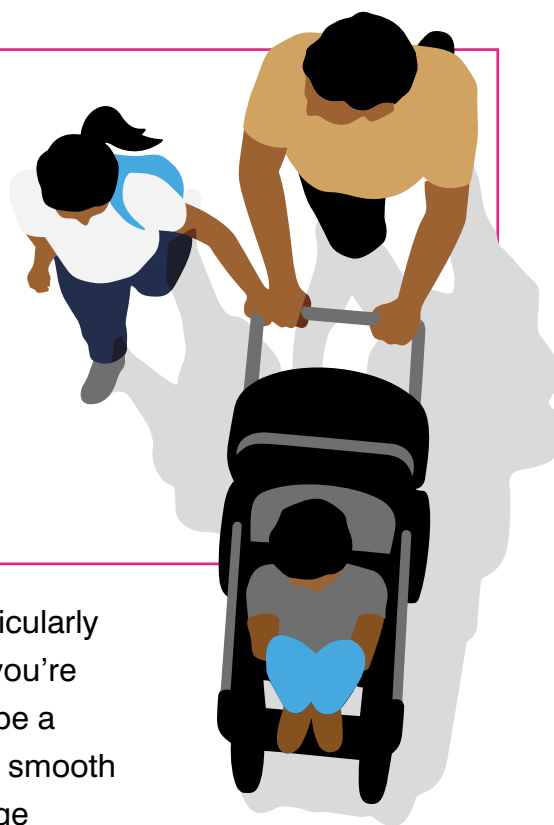
Watersides – canal towpaths, riverside and lakeside paths, seaside promenades – are always popular. But don't forget about local streets which are not only full of useful and interesting buildings but also bustling with street life. If countryside paths are easy, accessible and close by, there's no reason to exclude them, but try to show how the streets link up to the countryside.

Devising routes around particular themes can also help build interest. You can run walks with themes like photography and heritage at any time but seasonal themes are also attractive. For example walking through a park with a fine display of bulbs in early spring, or a woodland with bluebells in April and May. Possibly woodland colours in October, or try a Halloween ghost walk, or a romantic Valentine's Day walk.

SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ROUTES

These are the key practical factors to think about so everyone is safe and comfortable as possible. Depending on the abilities and expectations of your group, these factors don't necessarily rule a route out, but you'll need to think about how to manage potential problems, and consider risks (more about risk assessments on (p18).

- Path surfaces, widths, vegetation
- Steps and ramps
- Terrain: hilly or flat
- Obstructions, stiles, gates
- Dog mess, litter and other environmental issues
- Traffic, crossings, cyclists
- Crowds
- Weather and seasonal issues
- Individual's feelings



Uneven or unsurfaced paths are more of a hazard, particularly for people unsteady on their feet. Mud is a deterrent if you're in your best office shoes. Overhanging vegetation can be a problem when it whips back in people's faces. But nice smooth broad paths and pavements are good as they encourage people to walk side by side and talk.

Obstructions like stiles and fallen trees can be a problem even for people who appear to be able-bodied, particularly if they're not so mobile in their hips and knees. Getting past obstructions will also slow a group down.

Issues like dog mess and litter don't usually obstruct a walk but they do detract from the experience (and sometimes illegal fly tipping obstructs a path). On the other hand highlighting and following up the problem could result in something being done about it,

Traffic is the most common hazard. Think very carefully about where to cross roads. Always find safe crossing points: ideally a light controlled or zebra crossing but at the least a traffic island or a straight stretch of road with good visibility. Try to avoid country lanes with no pavements.

Crowds are a hazard on a group walk because it's very easy for the group to become split up.

A group walk is often a good way of exploring places people previously might not have visited alone – but do be aware that some people might be uncomfortable in certain places even in a group. For example some paths around housing estates, though public, have a 'private' feel and people might feel like they're intruding by using them. Use your judgement about this. Avoid going on to private land unless there's a right of access or it's otherwise open to the public.



RESEARCHING YOUR ROUTES

Don't be afraid to make use of other people's routes. If they're not 100% suitable you may be able to adapt them.

Councils and other people you work with may know about routes or have walking maps. Leading walks along routes on a printed map is a good way of encouraging people to use the map by themselves in the future. Libraries are often a good source of leaflets, guidebooks and other information.

There are numerous routes available online. Some places to look are:

- walkit.com (under Themed walks)
- walk4life.info
- ramblers.org.uk/find-a-walk (look for routes: you'll need to register but the full details of shorter routes are free to download even if not a Ramblers member)
- walkingbritain.co.uk

Not all the walks on these sites will be suitable as some of them are longer countryside walks but there are shorter and more urban walks too.

PLANNING YOUR OWN ROUTES

If you want to develop your own routes, the best way is to use maps to draft out some possible routes first, then go out and walk them, trying out the different options.

Unfortunately there are no ideal maps for planning walks so it's best to make use of several different resources.

- Street atlases like the A-Z are a good start but don't show all walking links. For example they often don't show paths through parks and green spaces, and might show a street as a dead end when there's a way through.
- Google maps at maps.google.com doesn't show all walking links either, but the satellite view is sometimes useful for spotting parks and green spaces, and Google Streetview can show whether streets are pleasant places to walk or not.
- walkit.com includes some but not all off-road paths and will automatically generate a variety of circular or linear routes using postcodes
- openstreetmap.org often shows paths that don't appear on other maps, though coverage varies from place to place
- Ordnance Survey Explorer maps show official public footpaths (in England and Wales) and long distance walking routes but don't show enough detail in urban areas



Finally don't be afraid to repeat routes. People don't always expect to walk a new route every time, and walking the same route in different seasons, or even in a different direction, can add variety.

PUBLICISING THE WALK

Make sure people know...

- Meeting time and place
- How to get there and back
- How long? Give a walking time – for example 1 hour – instead of or in addition to a distance, as most people find this more meaningful
- How difficult? If you ‘grade’ your walks for difficulty, give the grade.
- Why go on this walk? Tell people about the interesting places you’ll visit and the great time they’ll have.



Some people might want reassuring, or to find out more detail to check if the route is for them, so include a contact and be prepared to deal with questions.

See www.livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders for some sample materials.

THE RECCE

Recce (pronounced ‘recky’) is short for ‘reconnaissance’. It simply means walking the route beforehand. There are several reasons for this:

- Familiarity and confidence
- Checking for obstructions and other problems
- Checking diversions and ‘escape routes’
- Identifying potential hazards and difficulties (risk assessment: see p18)
- Checking stopping places, viewpoints, points of interest, cafés/pubs (if you expect a big group it’s best to warn staff at the café or pub in advance)

You should recce as close to the time of the actual walk as possible, and with the back marker (p27) if you can.

Always recce a walk before you lead it, even if you’ve used that route before, as things may well have changed and you need to be prepared as best you can. The only exception might be if you’re leading the same walk on a regular basis – if you were walking a route weekly for example.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Walking is a very low risk activity. Incidents on led walks are rare, serious ones even rarer. But we still need to be responsible in managing the risks that do exist. A risk assessment is a way of thinking sensibly about the risks along a route and how to manage them, and writing this down. We do this both to help us manage the risks on the walk itself and to show we've acted responsibly in thinking about risk.

All you do is walk the route identifying particular hazards, thinking about who might be most affected by them (for example children or people unsteady on their feet) and considering how to 'mitigate' them – manage the walk in a way that will reduce the risk they pose.

You can do a risk assessment alongside a recce. You could draft the risk assessment as you go, perhaps in pencil. Or take voice notes – most phones now let you do this and it's easier than stopping to write notes when on a walk. Make sure you complete the risk assessment as soon as possible after returning from the walk, while it's still fresh in your memory.

Check mobile phone coverage while you're out on the route too.

There's no need to risk assess a route afresh every time you walk it, but you should repeat the risk assessment every year or two years, or if there's been a major change or development affecting the route. We advise you assess the same route in different seasons, or at least think about how changing weather conditions might affect a route. For example are pavements and steps likely to be slippery underfoot in winter?

Remember to keep things in proportion and highlight only major and relevant risks – don't be tempted to start seeing risks everywhere. It's not worth noting every crossing of quiet roads with slow traffic. Just have a general note to warn the group about road crossings, and only highlight specific crossings if the road is very busy or the crossing particularly tricky. To repeat: walking is a low risk activity and its risks are usually easily managed, particularly on the sort of easy walks you'll be leading.

Finally a risk assessment should be a useful, living document, not just a piece of paperwork. Read and act on the risk assessment when you're managing the walk.

Here's a Living Streets sample risk assessment.

You can download blank versions at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders

Location	Hazard	Who	Mitigation
Crossing City Road	Traffic	All, especially slower individuals, children	Warn your group about traffic, use crossing, wait for lights
Steps to canal and to Shepherdess Walk	Steep and narrow steps	People less steady on their feet	Warn your group, manage group down steps
Grand Canal towpath	Cyclists	All, especially slower individuals, people with children, dogs	Warn your group, look out for cyclists from both directions, take care under low bridges
Grand Canal towpath	Water	Children	Warn parents, advise your group to walk on side away from water when allowing cyclists to pass
Briar Lane	Overhanging branches	All	Warn your group not to walk too close to the person in front and watch out for branches spring back



Here are some common hazards and the best ways to mitigate them which you can adapt for your own walks.

Hazard	Who	Mitigation
Slips and trips on uneven paths and steps (especially in muddy or frozen conditions)	All, especially people less steady on their feet	Warn your group, manage group around particularly hazardous areas, consider rerouting or cancelling in particularly bad conditions
Traffic at crossings	All, especially children and slower walkers	Warn your group about traffic, remind them to check it's safe for them rather than following the person in front, use safer crossing points, wait for lights
Traffic alongside roads	All, especially children and slower walkers	Use roads with pavements, avoid roads without them unless very quiet, warn your group, manage groups where there is a particular hazard.
Cyclists on shared use paths (and sometimes cycling illegally on pavements and paths)	All, especially slower walkers, people with children, dogs	Warn your group, look out for cyclists from both directions, take care under bridges with limited sightlines on canal towpaths*
Watersides	Children, all on narrow enclosed paths	Warn parents, warn all if path is very narrow, advise your group to walk on side away from water when allowing cyclists to pass
Overhanging vegetation	All	Warn your group not to walk too close to the person in front and watch out for branches spring back
Crowds, group becoming split up	All	Gather group and tell them to keep together. Alternatively plan an obvious route across a crowded area and arrange to meet at a specific time and obvious place on the other side.
Livestock	All, especially people with dogs	Keep group together through areas with livestock. Warn your group, and tell people with dogs to put them on a short lead

Your group technically have priority on shared use paths but not all cyclists respect this and with a large group it's courteous to manage the group to let cyclists pass if it's safe to do so.

Be aware of time-limited issues with crowds, such as around a large sports or entertainment venue when a major event is taking place.

THE DAY BEFORE

- Check weather forecasts: be prepared to divert or cancel if necessary
- Know who else is due to attend (including back marker)
- Re-check public transport, remind pub/café
- Check personal gear, maps, guides, paperwork, first aid kit
- Charge mobile phone

If you have to cancel the walk, try to let your group know and do your very best to send someone to the start to tell people the walk isn't going ahead.

Similarly if you're ill and can't do the walk, try and find a substitute but if you have to cancel it's always best to send someone to the start.



BEAT

BUS

STOP

BLUES

BURN

ONLY

SHOE

RUBBER

AT THE START

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Be early and welcoming, particularly to newcomers
- Make contact with back marker
- Make sure everyone registers or signs in
- Informally assess your group and act on concerns
- Introduce the walk (see below)
- Signal the start and move off



Aim to be at the start at least 15 minutes early and perhaps even 30 minutes if your walks are popular. This doesn't just ensure you're punctual, it's also going to help you feel in control and confident and give you time to do the paperwork.

We recommend leaders and back markers wear high visibility clothing. That way they can easily be identified at the start of the walk, and will also be able to see each other more clearly during the walk.

Sign-in sheets are a good idea for taking emergency contacts, getting a record of numbers and appearing professional and organised even if you don't use the information on them. You can download an example at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders. Note you shouldn't take personal details from people under 18 but you can record statistics about them: see p30.

It's rare to have concerns about individual's ability or clothing on walks like this but it might happen: see p31.

Don't just wander off and hope people will follow but make quite clear to everyone that the walk is starting. For example by saying "If everyone is ready, off we go."

INTRODUCING THE WALK

Introducing the walk is essential. It's a chance to be informative, to warn about hazards, to set the tone and lay the groundwork for the way you manage the walk. Remember that you're helping give people confidence to walk, being welcoming and inclusive, creating a sociable atmosphere and encouraging people to discover their local area.

- Introduce yourself and back marker and welcome the group
- Briefly outline the route, length, likely walking time, toilets, refreshment stops, points of interest, arrangements at end
- Highlight hazards and safety advice
- Highlight expectations (stay with group, let us know before leaving)
- Say that anyone with a health or other problem you should know about should approach you in confidence
- Explain this is a Living Streets walk and have information/literature to hand
- Remind adults with children of their responsibility (p32)
- Remind people with dogs to keep them under close control (p34)
- Explain pedometers if you use them
- Answer questions.

Use the risk assessment to guide what you say about hazards and safety. It's always worth stressing to the group that they should take care when crossing roads, wait for the green pedestrian signal where there is one, and look out for themselves rather than following the person in front.



ALONG THE WAY



KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Look behind you
- Manage the pace for everyone
- Keep the group together
- Stop intermittently for a catch-up
- Highlight points of interest
- Warn of and manage hazards
- Periodically count the group.
- Make sure your group walks responsibly
- Give clear instructions
- Be prepared to take charge.

Looking behind you is one of the most important skills a walk leader has. A walk leader who strides off into the distance without looking back isn't thinking about their group.

As leader you set the pace of the walk – and you need to make sure it's suitable for everyone. Don't be pressured into walking at the pace of the faster group members. If you look behind you, you'll see when people are falling behind.

A comfortable pace means that people aren't out of breath and can still talk comfortably as they walk along. If anyone is huffing and puffing on flat paths, you're walking too fast.

In general the rule in group walks is to stay between the leader and the back marker. On some regular health walks where lots of people know the route there's not a problem with letting people string out but this isn't likely to be the case on your walks, especially as you want to keep the group together so you can point out things.

There are times when you can safely let people walk ahead of the leader, for example on an obvious main path, so long as they know to wait at junctions ahead, or you can catch up with them before they reach a vital junction.



Stop every now and then so everyone can catch up, rest and drink. Make sure the people at the back also have a chance to catch their breath.

Highlighting points of interest helps people learn their surroundings on foot and gives a chance for a rest too. Make sure everyone has caught up before you start talking. Use your judgement – if you stop too often and for too long, people could get irritated or bored.

It's sometimes useful to stop and gather the group before particular hazards, like very busy road crossings, and ask them to wait for you on the other side of the hazard.

If you stop along the way for a refreshment break or to give people time to explore a site or building, make sure you gather everyone beforehand and tell them when and where you're setting off again. Don't rely on others to pass the word along.

As you'll normally be walking locally in populated areas there isn't the same risk of people getting lost as in open countryside but you still need to check you have everyone with you. Some people may want to leave along the way as there are bound to be bus stops, shops and other attractions – it's fine if they do this but they need to tell you or the back marker so you don't worry about them getting lost.

Make sure everyone is well-behaved, keeping dogs under control, shutting gates, sticking to paths etc.

MORE ABOUT PACE

Your heart and lungs benefit the most when you walk briskly, as if you were hurrying to a meeting. You should feel a little bit warmer and feel your heart beating a little bit faster, but still be able to talk easily. The actual pace will vary from person to person, depending on their weight and fitness levels. You can tell people how to walk briskly – but don't worry about setting a brisk pace on one of your own walks. Instead make sure the pace is easy and comfortable for everyone: they can always walk the routes briskly on their own later.

THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE: RESPECT. PROTECT. ENJOY.

In the countryside and green space, make sure you and your group:

RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS:

- plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs.

THE BACK MARKER

It's important to have a back marker, sometimes called a 'second leader', on walks with all but the smallest groups. Their job is to:

- Walk at the back
- Look out for stragglers
- Leave gates as they were found
- Help the leader manage the group over hazards
- Assist with incidents and emergencies, leading the group in an emergency if required
- Assist with paperwork
- Act as an ambassador for walking and Living Streets.

With a large group, a middle marker is useful, walking roughly in the middle of the group. Then the leader can keep an eye on the middle marker, and the middle marker keep an eye on the back marker.



INCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

- Stay calm and assess the situation. Prioritise incidents: life threatening situations first.
- Don't put yourself in danger.
- Protect people from further risk: make sure the rest of the group stays in a safe place nearby and not crowded around a casualty or incident. Move casualties out of danger if safe and practical.
- Give reassurance and comfort to any injured people.
- If appropriate, administer first aid or help first aider to do so.
- Call for help from emergency services if needed and remain at the scene until they arrive if safe and practical. Back marker could deal with the rest of the group.
- Follow instructions from the emergency services.
- As soon as practical, take names and contact details of people involved and witnesses, and make notes on what happened.
- As soon as possible, report the incident.

FIRST AID

It isn't necessary to be a first aider to lead a walk, but it's useful to have a first aider on any group activity.

We recommend walk leaders are trained in first aid. There are several well-known first aid providers who offer a variety of courses. They include:

- **British Red Cross** redcross.org.uk
- **St John Ambulance** sja.org.uk

First aid providers now encourage everyone to learn a few basic guidelines of first aid even if they don't attend a formal course. Organisations like the Red Cross have first aid guidelines on their websites and even publish free apps. Note that first aid advice for untrained people may differ from advice given during training.

It's worth carrying a first aid kit even if you aren't trained. There may be a first aider in your group, or for minor injuries the injured person could use the kit. Note that most of the contents of first aid kits have expiry dates so you need to make sure your kit is up to date.

AFTER THE WALK



KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Thank the group
- Ask for feedback
- Ask for pedometer counts if you use them
- Promote other walks/activities
- Ask people to bring a friend to the next walk
- Make sure everyone can get home safely (but remember it's not your job to get everybody home)
- Report any incidents and problems
- Do recording/monitoring
- Reflect and start thinking about your next walk

It's a good idea to keep a log of your walks: there's a form to do this at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders. That way you can keep track of numbers, the routes used, and the weather, as this often affects turnout and people's enjoyment. You can also reflect on what went well, and follow up on problems. For example was there an obstructed path through the park? Does the council know about it?

RECORDING WALKER DETAILS

We want to be able to measure how many people are walking more as a result of your led walks. It would be great if you could download a registration form at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders and fill it in for each of your walks. Once you have a few forms, return them to your local Living Streets Project Coordinator who will transfer the details onto our database. We will make sure all personal data is kept confidential, is stored securely and is only used anonymously to promote our work and report to our funders. Data will be securely destroyed after three years.

DATA PROTECTION

Personal data is data that can be used to identify an individual, for example names, addresses and contact details. Data like this is protected by law. When people give you their personal data, they do this on the understanding that it will only be used for a specific purpose. If someone gives you their name and email address on a led walk so you can tell them about future led walks, you mustn't use that information to publicise an unrelated activity or a product or service.

It's fine to collect and share statistical information like the numbers of people who turned up on walks, how many men and how many women and so on, so long as individuals can't be identified.

- Keep personal details confidential and secure
- Only use them for led walks purposes
- Don't pass them on to other people or organisations unless authorised
- Don't hold on to them longer than necessary or take copies
- Destroy or dispose of them securely
- Don't take any personal details from people under 18: record statistics only.



BUMPS ALONG THE WAY



CHALLENGING GROUP MEMBERS

Walk leading is nearly always an easy and enjoyable experience. But as always when dealing with groups and public events you may occasionally encounter problems and challenges.

For example someone might turn up who you don't think is fit enough, or well-dressed enough to complete the walk safely. Or a very slow walker who turns up on a regular basis may cause frustration among other group members. And there are very occasional examples of people who cause problems by refusing to do what you ask, or behaving inappropriately or abusively towards others.

If you encounter a situation like this, make sure you're fair, judge the situation appropriately, using common sense and sensitivity. On the one hand you want everyone to enjoy the walk. On the other, you need to think about the safety and enjoyment of the whole group, and sometimes this makes it difficult to cater for every individual. Sometimes you may have to make a snap decision on the day, but otherwise it's best to get help and support from others in dealing with problems. If you're running walks for a workplace or another organisation they may well have codes of practice and other support to help with difficult situations.

A good starting point is to make the walks as inclusive as possible. If someone who hasn't previously attended a walk turns out to be struggling, then accommodate this as best you can, perhaps by getting the back marker to accompany them. Avoid giving the impression they are putting you to too much trouble. A very slow pace might irritate some more able individuals but they should accept that in a group they can't walk as fast as they want.

If someone who is much less fit than everyone else turns up regularly, think about splitting your walks into very easy ones that would suit them much more closely, and slightly more challenging ones.

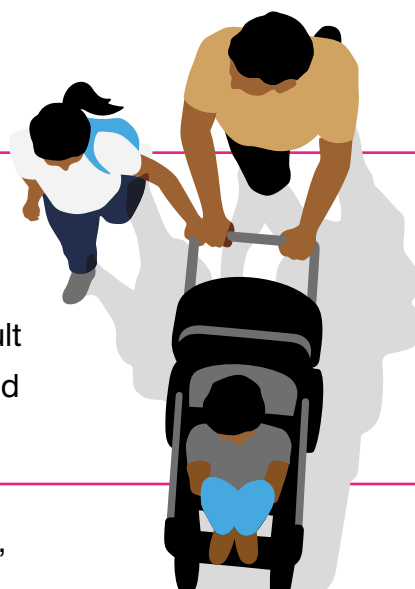
Don't make assumptions about people's preferences or abilities. For example some people are comfortable walking in very light footwear in a range of conditions. You could explain what the conditions are going to be like, and suggest they might be uncomfortable, but let them make up their own mind.

If there is a genuine safety concern, you need to act on this, and make clear to an individual that you believe it's unsafe for them to attend the walk. Walks take place in public space so it is very difficult to exclude an individual from following a group. A leader can only make clear to someone that they're not welcome on a walk and not regarded as part of the group.

The law applies on walks as it does anywhere else, so if someone has broken the law (eg through harassment, stalking or assault), this should be dealt with by the police or another appropriate authority.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- The law regards everyone under 18 as a child
- Walk leaders can't be responsible for unaccompanied under-18s
- Under-18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult
- Everyone should be aware of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults



It's important that under-18s are accompanied by a parent, guardian, carer or someone like a teacher or youth worker. That person needs to take responsibility for the young person.

Don't take personal details of people under 18, though it's fine to record anonymous statistics about them.

People who regularly lead walks attended by children and young people, even if they are accompanied, need to be checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, previously known as a CRB check). If you lead walks with an organisation that works with children and young people they can usually arrange this. There's no need to worry if children and young people turn up only occasionally, so long as they're accompanied by a responsible adult.

For more information, see ‘Safeguarding vulnerable people including children – policy and guidance’ at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders

BEING INCLUSIVE

Key things to remember:

- Make walks as accessible to as many people as possible
- Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments
- Make an effort to help people attend walks independently
- Remember your main responsibility is to lead the walk well and safely.

It’s not always easy to find routes that are both attractive enough and wheelchair accessible. But you do need to be prepared to make reasonable adjustments if people with particular needs want to attend, for example re-routing a walk to avoid steps for a wheelchair user.

Another example of how you can help would be if someone with visual impairment wanted to attend, and you knew one of your regular group members would be prepared to act as a sighted guide.

Do remember though that you have a responsibility to look after the whole group. You shouldn’t agree to take on special responsibility for looking after an individual as it would then be very difficult for you to lead the walk safely and effectively.

Finally, some adults with particular needs are regarded in law as vulnerable adults and we have safeguarding responsibilities for these people similar to those that apply to children and young people. Leaders who regularly lead walks attended by vulnerable adults, even if they are accompanied, need to be checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, previously known as a CRB check). If you lead walks with an organisation that works with vulnerable adults, they can usually arrange this. For more information, see ‘Safeguarding vulnerable people including children – policy and guidance’ at livingstreets.org.uk/walkleaders

DOGS

Owning a dog is a powerful motivation to go out walking – good for the owner as well as the dog. Most dog owners are friendly and responsible people who know how to control their pets, and as a general rule it's best to welcome well-behaved dogs on walks, so long as you feel comfortable in doing this.

But dogs can cause problems if not properly controlled. They can be aggressive to both people and other dogs, and leave a mess. Some people feel uncomfortable even around well-behaved dogs.

Dogs are an issue in areas where there are farm animals, or vulnerable wildlife, for example ground nesting birds during the nesting season. You may find there are places you want to walk where dogs are banned.

So make sure that dog owners know they must take responsibility for their pets and keep them under close control, on the lead where necessary, including around livestock, and clear up after them. If your walks include areas where dogs are banned and you can't easily divert around these, make sure you tell people this.

If you have to deal with an irresponsible dog owner, follow the guidance under 'challenging group members' above. Don't ban all dogs just to deal with one difficult owner.

CIVIL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Civil liability insurance protects people if a legal claim is made against them by a third party. For such a claim to be successful, the injured party has to be able to demonstrate that they have suffered as a result of recklessness or negligence. This is different from other types of insurance, for example personal accident insurance, which pay out directly to the victim.

For example, if someone is injured on a walk, they can't claim directly on civil liability insurance. But if they successfully sue the organiser and the walk leader in a civil court, alleging the injury was a result of negligence, the insurance protects the organiser and walk leader from individual responsibility for paying financial compensation (known as 'damages'). Claims may not just be about injury but also about for example damage to property or livestock.



Walk organisers, leaders and back markers are more vulnerable to such claims as according to the courts they have an “enhanced duty of care”, beyond what would be expected of an ordinary member of the public.

If you lead walks on behalf of Living Streets and you’re one of our trained walk leaders, you’re covered by our insurance so long as our staff know about the walks you’re leading.

If you lead walks on behalf of other organisations, you need to check to make sure you’re covered by their civil liability insurance.

Insurers require that any incident potentially resulting in a claim needs to be reported – which is why it’s important to record details of an incident and who is involved as soon as possible. You should report any incidents in which property is damaged, or where there’s an injury that requires first aid or could result in a hospital or GP visit, or anything that involves the emergency services. You can download a blank report form at livingstreets.org.uk/walk-leaders. Other organisations will have forms in a different format but the essential information is likely to be the same.



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**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY WALKING WITH LIVING STREETS.
TOGETHER WE CAN CREATE A WALKING NATION, WHERE
PEOPLE OF ALL GENERATIONS ENJOY THIS SIMPLE ACT.**

livingstreets.org.uk

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