

WALK IT 2020-2021

Annual Report
April 2020 - April 2021





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Front cover image: Jedburgh Walk It Group – Socially Distanced

WALK IT VISION

All residents in the Scottish Borders have the right to good health and enjoy equal opportunities to lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. We aim to support this vision by the running of the Health Walk Project - Walk It.

What is Walk It?

The aim of the Paths to Health Walk It project is to support and develop Walk It health walks in all locations in the Scottish Borders. Walk It forms part of the national initiative to improve Scotland's Health. The project is funded by NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council.

Walk It was established in 2005. The main aim was to work in partnership to reduce health inequalities and build networks to tackle long term conditions.

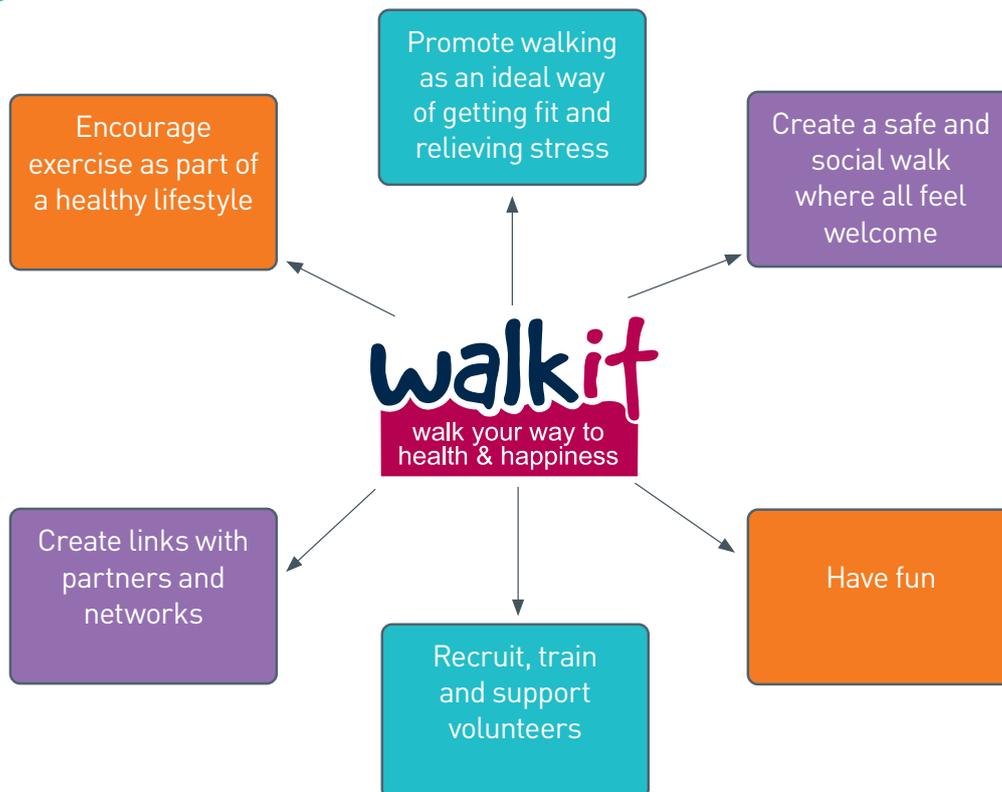
Actions on Inequalities

- Actions that undo the underlying structural inequalities in power and resources
- Actions that mitigate the health and social consequences of social inequalities
- Actions that help individuals and communities resist the effects of inequality

Originally, Walk It worked successfully across Walkerburn, Burnfoot, Eyemouth, Langlee & Selkirk. Since 2010 we have adapted to take a wider approach to include the whole of the Scottish Borders into the project and to work in partnership with organisations to take forward new ways of working that promote wellness and physical activity.

Walk It works with the NHS Borders Joint Health Improvement Team and develops programmes based on an understanding of what strategic data tells us is important, alongside consultation with partners and local people on what works.

Project Aims



Health Walk Format

- A Walk It walk is a Health Walk: **Short; Safe, Social, Low Level, Led and Free.**
- Walks are up to one hour on good terrain.
- Walk leaders for the project are all trained volunteers.

Staffing

The project is run by one part time staff member (21 hours).

Paths for All

Paths for All is the charity that is responsible for Health Walks in Scotland. Their remit is to help support the development of 'walking for health' groups throughout Scotland. They do this by:

- Providing start-up grants for walking projects
- Developing all training for Volunteers
- Information and support through regular contact with projects



Recruitment and Training

Walk It recruits, trains and develops local people to become Walk It Volunteers and partners to co-design and facilitate health improvement opportunities in their communities that promote inclusion, wellbeing and the prevention of avoidable illnesses.

Volunteers are trained by Walk It and the suite of training is as follows:

- Walk Leader Training
- First Aid
- Dementia Friendly
- Strength and Balance
- Safety Outdoors
- Disability Awareness
- Body Boosting Bingo
- Basic Map Reading and Navigation

The current post holder is qualified and accredited to deliver all of this training, although First Aid is delivered by Scottish Borders Council.

During 2020 due to the COVID-19 situations Paths for All moved all training to online training which meant that we were able to continue training and developing our volunteers.

There is a Volunteering Policy and all recruitment is done by the post holder.

Volunteering Hours

Currently there are around 100 'active' Volunteers. There are many more on call. Some will lead weekly walks, some will lead Walk It Further Walks and some get involved in project walking and Walking Festivals.

In 2020 over **500 hours** were delivered by Volunteers.



Chirnside Walk It Group

Training Delivery

In 2020 the project delivered the following training:



We hope in 2021 to be able to deliver online: [Basic Map Reading and Navigation Training Course](#)

We trained:

Course Offered	Number of Courses	People Trained
Walk Leader	5	62
Strength and Balance	3	34
Dementia Friendly Training	1	11
First Aid	Monthly	24

Walk It Walks 2020 - Profile

Clearly COVID-19 and the lockdown situation impacted the project in a huge way in 2020. We closed all walks down in March with a limited re-opening in September – December. Despite this, when we were allowed out to walk, we were delighted that 60% of all of our walks opened up again.

In the Scottish Borders Towns and Villages there are currently **30** Walk It Walks. We also hold Walk It Further walks – these walks are progression walks for those wanting a longer more challenging walk.

In 2020 we delivered **107** mainstream Walk It Walks with **994** walkers and **6** Walk IT Further Walks.

Through training we developed **62** brand new Walk It walk leaders in 2020, adding to our volunteer resources.

We worked with **5** partner organisations to develop walking for their organisations. This is much quieter than normal due to the restrictions on partner organisations and ourselves being able to deliver face to face services.

We started **3** new Buggy Walking Groups in conjunction with Early Years Centres.

We performed in line the national average in Scotland with an average of **11** Walkers per walk.

45 NEW Walkers joined to programme in 2020. **55 %** of new walkers are over 65. **75%** of new walkers were female, and **25%** male

A Social Return on Investment project showed the value of the project to be **£8** for every **£1**.

Over **500** Hours were given to the project by Volunteers in 2020

Funding

Core funding for the role comes from the NHS Borders Joint Health improvement Team.

The co-ordinator also gained additional funding for two new projects in 2020.

£5k (Smarter Choices Smarter Places) – Walk to Work Project

Whilst the funding was secured for this in 2019, the project has now been carried over into 2020, in the main due to COVID-19 delaying activity around this project. Since then it has been redesigned and will be delivered in 2021 as a 'Work Out at Work Project'

£5k (Paths for All) Buddy walking 1-1 Programme

This was launched in November and worked with Living Streets and BHA Befriend as partners. It was very successful until it was placed on hold January 2021 due to lockdown restrictions again. We feel this will play a large role in the project in 2021.

Virtual Walking Challenge

We also ran a virtual Walking Challenge in 2020 to keep people motivated to log steps daily during lockdown. Our combined Team Efforts in 2020 was 3,936,763 steps Walked – NEARLY 4 million steps – Amazing.

We ran several other challenges in 2020:

Ditch the Desk and Workout from Home

Walk Once Day this Winter

Around the House in 80 Days

Walk With Nature

All based on keeping people active and moving whilst in lockdown



Reporting

The project reports monthly into Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders Joint Health Improvement Team.

Scottish Borders Council:

- Part fund the project
- Host the role
- Sits within the Countryside and Access Team
- Provides management support
- Has Steering Group participation

NHS Borders Joint Health Improvement Team:

- Funds the Role
- Provides management support and decision making
- Has Steering Group Participation

The project reports quarterly into the Walk It Steering Group Board

Conclusion

Despite the fact that walks were not able to take place as usual due to Covid restrictions the project has been successful in attracting new walkers and volunteers and keeping them and wider colleagues engaged in the benefits of walking.

Walk It has offered a robust and Borders wide programme of regular Walking for Health Groups

Walk It has demonstrated the breadth of partnership work that can be developed by making best use of resources and opportunities at a locality level.

Walk It actively recruit volunteers and partners to make things happen while maintaining an active role in planning processes that support a reduction in inequalities and promote wellness in communities.

Walk It has an engagement model that works, is community led and supports new ways of working to promote wellness.

Walk It delivers activities that are intended to enable people to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

Walk It will continue to work in partnership to build the capacity of other agencies to improve health and wellbeing through training and development & project specific work.

Walk It is planning to focus on demonstrating the difference their work makes and use every opportunity to evidence impact through improvement planning and evaluation.

Walk It is also planning to actively seek out funding opportunities to increase capacity and support partnership developments in other projects and areas.

Walk It will continue to make a difference to the physical activity offering in the Scottish Borders.

Walk It Walks 2020/2021 - Feedback

"I had been isolated at home due to COVID-19 so it has been good to get out again in the fresh air"

"The group is really friendly and welcoming and the cuppa is great!"

"The Walk It walk has been so good for me to get out and about again"

"It is interesting to walk to places you didn't even know were there"

"I have made lots of new friends walking with the group - it's just great"

"The best things about Walk It is getting out for a chat with people"

"Walk It has helped my health and fitness levels so much"

Contact Details

Denise Carmichael
Scottish Borders Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA
E: Denise.carmichael@scotborders.gov.uk
T: 01835 826702