



Volunteer Walk Health Leader Information Pack



Volunteer Health Walk Leaders

Put Your West Foot Forward

What is the 'Put Your West Foot Forward' project?

The aim of the project is to get the most inactive people in West Lothian more active by promoting walking as a physical activity. The strategy to achieve this includes:

- A programme of led walks
- Raising awareness of the benefits of walking for health
- Providing local information about walking routes to promote independent walking.

This is currently being tackled in the following ways:

- Weekly led health walks are operating in local communities such as Craigshill, Bathgate, Broxburn, Armadale, Deans and Winchburgh.
- A community based walking programme targeting low risk patients referred by health professionals, e.g. cardiac rehabilitation, diabetes programme, weight management.

Why Walk?

Physical inactivity has been described as the 'silent killer' of our time. Currently in Scotland seven out of ten of us are not taking enough exercise to benefit our health. Walking is an ideal activity to promote to inactive people as it is easier to start and sustain than other activities. Walking costs nothing, requires no special equipment, is accessible to most people, is easily incorporated into our daily lives, it is a relatively low risk activity and combines all the physical benefits of activity with the added bonus of social contact.

The Walks

The project offers short led health walks lasting between 20-60 minutes and trained walk leaders lead the walks within the local area. A referral scheme has been developed and trained buddy walkers lead community based walks for patients referred to the project for medical reasons. Additional training is given to volunteers who require further information about specific conditions.

What Do Led Walks offer participants?

- They provide an opportunity for social contact which can motivate people to walk regularly.
- They can overcome the fear barrier of walking alone.
- They can help people who are insecure or lack confidence take the first crucial steps.
- Walk leaders can provide support, useful information and advice on walking.

The role of the Volunteers

Walk leaders – Each walk has at least two leaders, one at the front and one at the back. For a larger group an assistant walk leader can walk within the middle of the group.

- **The Front Leader** leads the walkers along the set route. They may help to set the pace of the walk particularly through the warm up and cool down stages but they need to ensure that this is an appropriate pace for the rest of the group.
- **The Back Marker** can sometimes have the more important and challenging role. They need to motivate and encourage the slower, less experienced walkers who are at the back of the group. They may also need to deal with any illness or injuries.
- **Assistant Walk Leader** will provide assistance and encouragement to walkers within the middle of the group. In addition the assistant walk leader will be able to slot into either the front leader or back marker role when other leaders are unable to attend.
- **Walking Buddies** walk on a one to one basis with an individual who is unable or uncomfortable walking in a group. The Walking buddy takes on a befriender-style role and is required to support and motivate the walker.

Other roles that volunteers can undertake include:

- Sourcing suitable routes
- Assisting the Coordinator with risk assessing routes
- Measuring route
- Promotion of the project, e.g. circulating posters and leaflets
- Participating in local & national events to promote walking
- Provide background knowledge to make routes interesting for the participants
- Assist in devising leaflets and other promotional material
- Assist in administrative duties, e.g. collating information from walkers

What will you get from volunteering?

- Sense of achievement from encouraging and supporting others
- Make a valuable contribution to the project and to the community
- Meet new people
- Keep active and fit
- Help others be more active!
- Opportunity to be outdoors
- Use skills you already have
- Learn new skills
- Become part of a national network of volunteers
- The Walk Leader training is certified and is recognised by the British Heart Foundation, National Centre for Physical Activity.
- You will also gain a certification in Emergency First Aid Training.

Volunteers must be:

- Over 18
- Friendly, approachable and sociable
- Reliable
- Patient...do not mind being a 'back marker'
- Enthusiastic about walking
- Able to participate in training. Walk Leader training is one day, Emergency First Aid is 4 hours, Volunteer Induction is 2 hours, and Physical Activity Promotion is 3 hours. This training is spread over a two month period.

What we will provide?

- A one-day Volunteer Walk Leader training course based locally
- Basic emergency first aid training
- Volunteer Induction
- Physical activity promotion training – the importance of physical activity, the benefits and the barriers to people
- Support and regular communication from the project Coordinator
- Travel expenses to and from walks and training (reimbursement of public transport or a mileage rate of 30p per mile)
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses, e.g. refreshments
- A small ruck sack
- A waterproof jacket
- Small first aid kit
- Regular team meetings (every 6 weeks)
- Walk Leaders will work with groups in pairs
- Public Liability Insurance and Employers Liability Insurance

What level of commitment are we looking for?

- Volunteer Walk Leaders need to commit up to an hour and a half each week as walks last up to one hour plus time for refreshments.
- We ask that volunteer walk leaders to commit to two sets of walk programmes, generally a set is 12 weeks. However this is flexible and negotiable.
- Holidays and other commitments can be covered.

If this level of commitment is too much but you would still like to be involved in the programme then you could help by being an assistant walk leader. Please talk to the Health Walk Development Officer for further details.

Volunteer Walk Leaders Training Course

The Paths to Health project offers a one-day training course for volunteers wishing to lead walks in their local community. This is a requirement of all volunteers wishing to lead walks with the 'Put Your West Foot Forward'

project. On completing this training volunteers are covered against public liability claims.

The training covers the following areas:

- The benefits of physical activity and walking for health
- Identifying barriers to physical activity
- Motivating people to walk
- A demonstration health walk
- Components of a health walk
- Monitoring safety and effectiveness
- Posture, physical activity and special conditions
- Safety
- How to lead a walk
- Essential paper work

Leader competencies

After the training day you will be able to:

- Outline the main benefits to be gained by regular walking
- Organise and lead a walking session
- Outline the role of the leader at the start, during and at the end of a health walk
- Recognise potential safety hazards
- Advise on practical issues such as intensity, frequency, posture and clothing
- Outline the essential qualities of a 'good' walk leader

WHAT NEXT?

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer walk leader or want to know more about the project and how you can become involved, please contact the Health Walk Development officer for an informal chat. Alternatively complete the application form and we will be in touch shortly to arrange an informal interview.

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Insurance Information Sheet



Insurance Cover

Volunteer walk leaders play a very important role in the delivery of local Paths to Health schemes. The Paths to Health project is committed to supporting these volunteers through training and the provision of insurance.

It is highly unlikely that anyone will need to use the insurance we offer, however we believe that volunteers deserve “peace of mind”.

Insurance cover for volunteer walk leaders is available *free of charge* to any project promoting walking for health. **The condition for receiving this insurance cover is that volunteers have attended the paths to health Walk Leader training.**

The cover includes injury to third parties (defined as course participants, members of the public, landowners, etc – indeed anyone who is not a volunteer walk leader or employee of a scheme) as well as damages to other person’s property including trespass. The insurance also covers damage that the volunteer walk leaders may do as well as claims against them arising from injuries to third parties. The cover does not extend to injuries to volunteer walk leaders themselves who will be covered by West Lothian Council Employers Liability Insurance Policy.

The cover includes

- ❖ Indemnity limit of £2 million
- ❖ Advice given as leader
- ❖ Indemnity for libel, slander, trespass, nuisance and immediate pollution
- ❖ Damage to hired, rented or borrowed premises

In the event of a claim our insurance agent, Cyril Cooper, CMC Insurance, will deal with allegations made against leader for injury or damage. The agent will also deal with third parties and their solicitors. For further information on the insurance cover and volunteer walk leader training please contact the Project office.