

WALK IT 2022-2023

Annual Report

1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023



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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?

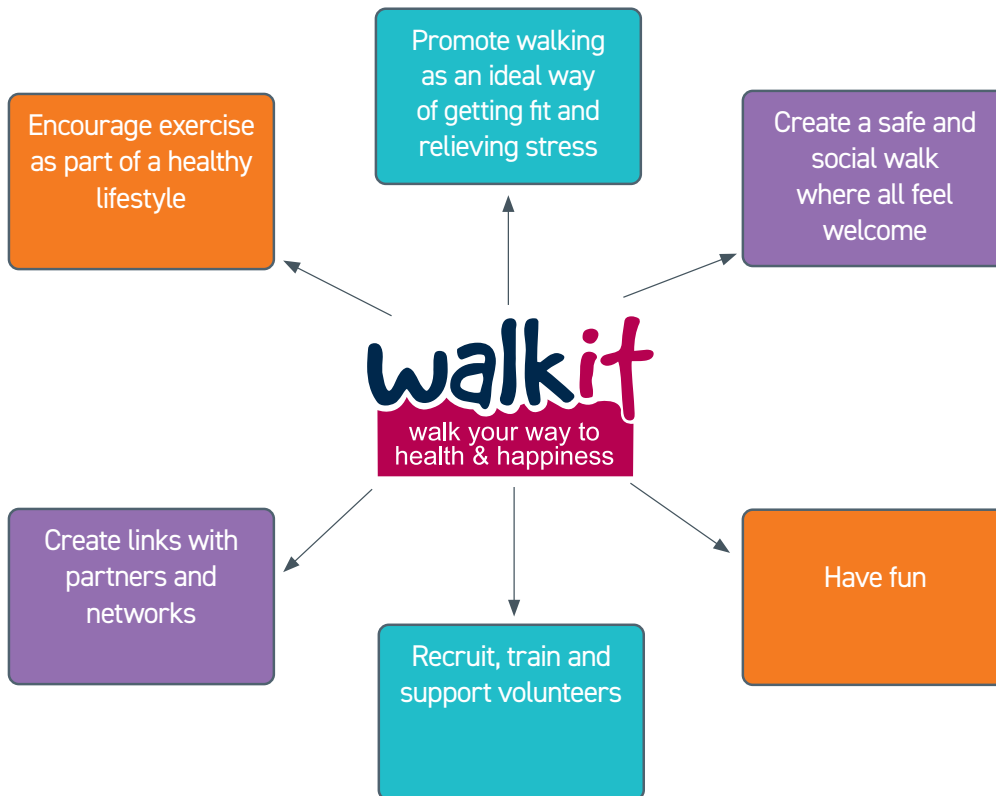
The aim of the Paths to Health Walk It project is to support and develop Walk It walks in all locations in the Scottish Borders. Walk It forms part of the Paths for All National initiative to improve Scotland's Health. The project is funded by NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council.

The main aim is to work in partnership to reduce health inequalities and build networks to tackle long term conditions.

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
- Providing Development Officer support for the project



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 (Scottish Borders Council)
- Dementia Friendly
- Strength and Balance
- Safety Outdoors
- All Ability Walking (run by Scottish Disability Sport)
- Body Boosting Bingo
- Basic Map Reading and Navigation (led by SBC Ranger Service)
- Outdoor Leadership and Navigation (run by SBC Outdoor Education Team)

The current post holder is qualified and accredited to deliver most of this training, although some of our more advanced Map Reading is done by SBC Ranger Service and SBC Outdoor Education.

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

During the Year we added 78 new Walk Leaders

Currently there are around 100 'active' volunteers. There are many more on call. During the year we added **78** new Walk Leaders. Some volunteers will lead weekly walks, some will lead Walk It Further Walks and some get involved in project walking i.e. Buggy Walking Groups, 1-1 Buddy Walking, Walking Festivals and Walk and Talk Walks for Mental Health.

In 2022 - 2023 over 4,100 hours were delivered by Volunteers for the Walk It Project.



Coldstream Walk It Group

Training Delivery

In 2022-2023 the project delivered the following training:

5 Walk Leader
Training Courses

3 Strength and
Balance Courses

2 Dementia
Friendly Course

We also developed our existing Basic Map Reading and Navigation Training Course to online delivery and ran this in Summer 2022 and will run this again in Summer 2023.

We trained:

Course Offered	Number of Courses	People Trained
Walk Leader Training	5	78
Strength and Balance	3	26
Dementia Friendly Training	3	19
First Aid	Monthly	32
Basic Map Reading and Navigation	1	10
Outdoor Leadership	3	32

Walk It Walks 2022 - 2023 Profile

In the Scottish Borders Towns and Villages there are currently 43 mainstream Walk It Walks. We also now hold Walk It Easy Walks - these are Walks for those with a mobility issues or a long term health condition who are seeking something shorter and on good terrain - we have 6 of these walks now.

We also offer Walk It Further Walks - these walks are progression Walks for those wanting a longer and more challenging walk.

Walk It Easy

We received funding to develop and deliver the Walk It Easy Project for the year and this was for £5,000 from Paths for All. We were delighted to add six of these groups to our existing portfolio and two of these are in partnership with Sheltered Housing Complexes. We are able to take in Walkers with more complex needs for these Walks and we have those with limited mobility, Mobility scooters, and a range of long term Health Conditions, adults with a dementia diagnosis and adults with learning difficulties.

Walk It New Projects – Walk It Easy



Post Covid it was still evident many walkers were still experiencing a decline in physical activity also it was noted that we needed to perhaps offer something slower to accommodate mobility and long term health conditions.

We received funding from Paths for All and launched Walk It Easy. These walks were slower paced than mainstream walks and had two Walk Leaders each walk. We were able to develop the offering for those using a mobility aid (walking sticks, wheelchairs, motorised scooter etc). They were also for those with a Dementia Diagnosis, adults with a learning disability or a mental health diagnosis. A safe space for people to join us on a really easy walk. We started in Galashiels, then added: Kelso, Duns, Ayton, Lauder and Melrose.

The walks have been a tremendous asset to the Walk It portfolio.

We have monitored and evaluated this project and the benefits to the walkers have been tremendous and here is some feedback from a walkers in the Duns Walk It Easy Group:

“I am visually impaired so to be able to go on a Walk with a walking group has been amazing. Someone provides me with a ‘walking arm’ and it is so great to be out and interacting with a group. I find it very difficult to join in things and this group has been wonderful for me and my confidence.”



Eyemouth Walk It Group

Walk It – Walk It Further

We also run Walk It Further Walks – these walks are any Walk It Health walk that is over one hour in duration.



Walk It Pathway

So the pathway is really encompassing and now comprises:

- 1-1 Buddy Walks (1 Walk Leader, 1 Walker)
- Walk It Easy – Easy Terrain Half an hour (suitable for those with a disability, wheelchair, walking aids)
- Walk It – One hour Health Walk
- Walk It Further – One Hour +

Walk It -Training

Walk It is delighted to have a new enhanced training pathway for volunteers:

- **Entry Level**
 - **WALK LEADER TRAINING**
- **Entry Level – Recommended**
 - **FIRST AID** (one day emergency First Aid course - face to face)
 - Dementia Friendly Training
 - All Accessibility Training
 - Strength and Balance Training
- **Skilled Level**
 - For leading Walk It Further or Walking Festival Walks
 - Map Reading Workshop and Introduction to Navigation and Route Planning
 - This is one day face to face practical course
 - Outdoor Leadership and Advanced Navigation
 - This is a one day face to face practical course

This now offers real development for Walk Leaders in terms of their own knowledge, skillset and development.

Walk It - Statistics

In 2022-2023 we delivered **1232** mainstream Walk It Walks (an increase of 60% on prior year). We had **10,913** walkers attend these walks (an increase of 45% on prior year). We really feel that the walks are now normalised again post Covid and are delighted at this growth. Our average number of Walkers per Walk is **11.2** Walkers – up 40% on prior year. We attracted 78 brand new walkers

We have **43** Active Walks and **32** of these walks are Dementia Friendly. We have the highest number of Dementia Friendly walks in our project in the whole of Scotland

We developed **78** Walk Leaders this year through our training offer

We worked with **22** partner organisations to develop walking in partnership with their organisations

We performed ABOVE the Scottish national average with an average of **11** Walkers per walk

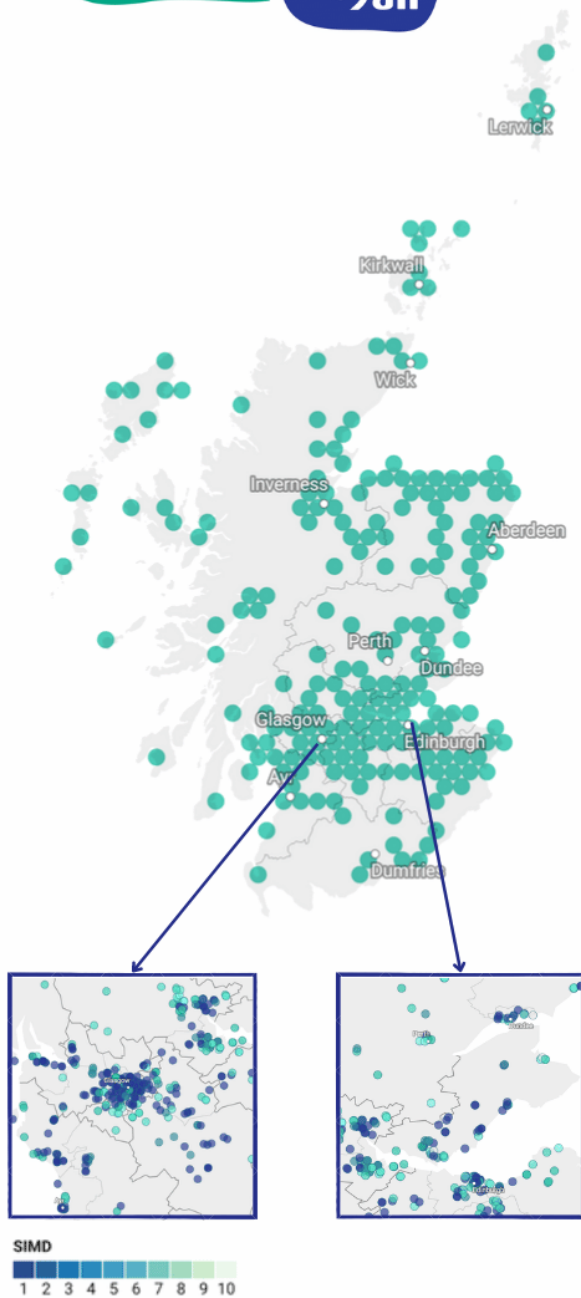
84 NEW Walkers joined the programme in 2022 - 2023 Male **26 %** Female **57%**

Over **4,100** hours were given to the project by volunteers in 2022

Health Walks in Scotland – Geographical Spread



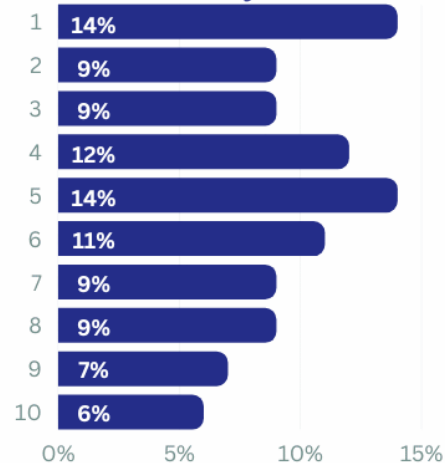
Health Walks Geographical spread



Scottish Health Walk Network members deliver **870** regular Health Walks across Scotland.

58% of Health Walks are delivered in the areas of the bottom 5 SIMD deciles.

Health Walks by SIMD



The biggest clusters of Health Walks are closely aligned with some of the most deprived areas of Scotland.

The map illustrates the distribution of Health Walks throughout Scotland, while the close-up views provide specific examples of Health Walks organized by SIMD.

April 2023

New Walkers

We attracted another **84** new Walkers this year. There is a breakdown below of the demographics that we are able to capture from our new Walkers

Walk It New Walkers Statistics

- Male 26% Female 57%
- Age

16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	N/A
2 (2%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	10 (11%)	18 (21%)	23 (27%)	24 (28%)	3 (3%)

- Referral route

GP	Health Professional	Family/Freinds	Leaflet	Facebook	Poster	News	Other*
1 (1%)	12 (14%)	37 (44%)	13 (15%)	0	7 (8%)	1 (1%)	22 (26%)

- Health conditions

Diabetes	Heart/D	Mental/H	Weight	COPD	H/Blood	Cancer	Dementia	Other	None
10 (11%)	9 (10%)	17 (20%)	13 (15%)	2 (2%)	16 (19%)	9 (10%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)

You can find all of our Walks using this QR Code:



Case Study – Hike and Bike Hub – Galashiels

I first met Angela and George Crow when I was invited to speak about Walk It in the Autumn of 2021 at the Parents of Children with Additional Support Needs Group. I had mentioned Walk It and Walk Leader training. Amongst others George was very interested and he attended a Walk Leader training course in December of that year. I also trained Angela. We set up some ASN Walking Groups for parents and George began leading the Galashiels Group. I also became aware of their ambitious and exciting plans to develop and deliver a Hike and Bike Hub in Galashiels and I invited them to the Eildon Community Hub Group to present what they were thinking and planning. I also received a request in early 2022 for a Walk It Easy Group to be held with the new Eildon Housing Sheltered Living accommodation in Galashiels.



I approached George and Angela again and we set this group up and off it went! In the autumn of 2022, I again worked with them when both helped with the Scottish Borders Walking Festival. They kept me updated on their Hub plans and I was delighted when they received some funding and found premises in Central Galashiels and their plans became reality. The Hike and Bike Hub opened in February 2023. It is busy and buzzing! They have greatly enhanced the active travel scene in the Borders and have a weekly health walk as well as cycling activities and services.

Meeting them and working with them has been an absolute pleasure and we are delighted to have close links with the Hub and look forward to many more adventures together.

Angela and George over to you.....

Walking has always been one of our passions and it was great to be able to undertake the training to become walk leaders. Through Walk It, we have been able to access training to develop our skills, and to meet some great folk along the way! We would encourage anyone who enjoys walking to consider becoming a Walk It walk leader as it is a great way to keep healthy and to support others look after themselves too. Walking and chatting is an easy and free way to improve health and wellbeing, and we cannot recommend it enough!

Funding

Core funding for the Walk It Co-ordinator comes from the NHS Borders Joint Health improvement Team.

The co-ordinator also gained additional funding for two new projects in 2021.

£5k Paths for All Walk It Easy Programme

£5k Paths for All Walk It New Walkers

4k Smarter Choices Smarter Places for upskilling training for Walk Leaders

We ran several other Physical Activity challenges in 2022-2023:

Walking Challenge during National Walking Month

Ditch the Desk and Workout at home

Workout at Work – Daily and monthly challenges developed and run by post holder

The Walk It Coordinator also champions physical activity in the workplace and runs a daily Fitness Challenge for staff and delivers exercise sessions for staff wellbeing

The Walk It post holder based on keeping people active and moving



Walk It Team



Jedburgh Walk It Group

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

Walk It

- has offered a robust and Borders wide programme of regular Walking for Health Groups
- has demonstrated the breadth of partnership work that can be developed by making best use of resources and opportunities at a locality level.
- 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.
- has an engagement model that works, is community led and supports new ways of working to promote wellness.
- delivers activities that are intended to enable people to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

Next Steps

- 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 develop its training provision.

From a recent survey of Walkers done by Paths for All - 90% of participants reported health improvement (physical, mental or overall) as a result of joining a health walk. More than half of participants would have had fewer friends and a fifth would have very little social contact. Nearly half of the participants stated that without Paths for All, their group would not exist. Furthermore, 44% stated that people would struggle to maintain their activity levels. 15% of participants reported having a disability or a health condition that affect their ability to carry out daily activities.

2022/2023 - Feedback

"Walking with the Darnick group is always nice - Brian Barry is a good walk leader and the group is very friendly."

Darnick Walker

"I really enjoyed our walk and I wouldn't have know it existed even though I've lived here for years"

Jedburgh Walker

Turning exercise into an enjoyable social occasion helping to refresh us mentally as well as physically. This is what we do on a Wednesday morning, striding across Lauder's lovely countryside, sharing stories and giving each other support.

Walk Leader - Anne

It's funny but as a walk leader from outside Galashiels, I often find myself showing the group things or telling them things about Gala that they didn't know and that makes me feel good too!

"It is a good paced walk and we have great conversations on all sorts of topics"

'I really look forward to the Tuesday walks in Stow: not just for the exercise and the break from my desk, but the chance to catch up with what's going on in the village'

"I enjoy the Darnick Walk-It for the good company and variety of routes. The cuppa at the end is always enjoyable too."

Darnick Walker

I very much enjoy walking with our village group. It's a great way to meet people and enjoy the chat. Our walk leader has been great in planning different walks. Having tea and coffee at the end is a bonus.

Darnick walker

I am a walk leader of many years' experience. I keep doing it because of the physical health and mental well-being benefits 'Walk It' has for all its participants. Walking is much easier when you're chatting!

The steps just add up without anyone really noticing and the refreshments at the end, well that's what makes the walk worthwhile. Some new friendships have sprung from these walks and that is lovely to see.

Walk Leader

The walking group is a huge part of my son's week. His carers bring him along each week and he also attends all the events that are organised! He is always made to feel welcome by everyone and it's a great opportunity to socialise and stay healthy!
Thank you so much!



Black Path - April 2023



Alzheimer's Walk It Group - Floors Castle

Contact Details

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