



paths
for all

FOR A HAPPIER,
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

Everyday walking for a happier, healthier Scotland

Strategy 2017-2020



“Physical inactivity is one of the biggest public health issues affecting our society”

Ian Findlay joins walkers from Stirling Walking Network on their weekly Health Walk.

Foreword from Ian Findlay

Chief Officer, Paths for All

Paths for All's vision is for a happier, healthier Scotland where physical activity improves quality of life and wellbeing for all. This strategy sets out how we will work passionately and remain focused on delivering funding, resources and high-quality support to help everyone in Scotland walk more and be more active. We will work together with our partners, networks and volunteers to make our vision of a happier, healthier Scotland a reality.

Physical inactivity is one of the biggest public health issues affecting our society with implications for present day physical, mental and social health, as well as the future health of the people of Scotland.

We believe that everyday walking is the key to tackling physical inactivity in our society. This is because it is the only completely free, easily accessible activity that most people can do. All of our work, including multi-use path development, promotion of active travel and our Health Walks, aims to increase levels of walking.

Increasing physical activity in urban and rural environments in Scotland has the potential, on a population scale, to increase wellbeing and quality of life, improve health and the environment, and support local communities. Paths for All has led the way in this field for over 20 years. Our unique focus and position as a partnership of national organisations allows us to effectively deliver interventions, across sectors and throughout Scotland creating real and sustained behaviour change.

While our focus is on promoting everyday walking, we don't do this in isolation - we promote other physical activity too. We are adamant that paths and streets must be accessible for all users. We recognise that walking, cycling and public transport are essential components to the active travel mix. However, it is promotion of walking where we can make the biggest impact and it is where we have focused our expertise.

Through developing our strategy, I have been struck by the optimism and opportunity around walking and physical activity. Our work is relevant across policy areas as diverse as community development, environment, health, transport and inequalities. The important role that walking and physical activity can contribute to these policies underlines the value of what Paths for All does and will continue to do.

We are striving to get everyone in Scotland walking more every day. However, we could not do this without the partners, funders, projects and volunteers who support our aims. We are grateful for their support. While no one underestimates the challenge of overcoming physical inactivity, we firmly believe that over the next three years we can, and will, contribute towards Scotland becoming a more active nation.

Our Vision

Paths for All's vision is for a happier, healthier Scotland where physical activity improves quality of life and wellbeing for all.

We want to get Scotland walking:

Everyone.

Everyday.

Everywhere.



We will help **everyone** to be active for improved social, physical and mental health.



We encourage physical activity with a particular focus on **everyday walking**.



We work to improve environments so that people can be active **everywhere**.

Our Values

The following values are core to our work:

Delivery focussed

We have a successful track record of translating policy and objectives into desired impacts and outcomes.

Connected

We have extensive networks across all sectors of society.

Insightful

We have knowledge and experience which, combined with our expert and trusted voice, can offer unique and perceptive insights.

Independent

We have a reputation for speaking with a credible, well-balanced and impartial voice.

Cross policy working

We work across a wide range of national policy areas and can therefore offer a uniquely wide perspective.

Our strategy



The Challenge

Physical inactivity is a huge burden upon the people of Scotland.

The human body has evolved to be active. Without physical activity, we suffer ill health. Over the last 20 years, physical activity has been designed out of daily life. Heavy use of cars, computers and technology has resulted in increasingly sedentary study, work, leisure and travel habits. The epidemic of physical inactivity must be tackled proactively for the future health and happiness of our population and prosperity of Scotland. Some key facts highlight the problem:

Physical inactivity contributes to nearly 2,500 deaths in Scotland each year.¹

In 2015, 63% of adults took part in the recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity each week.²

Just under three quarters (73%) of children met the guidelines of 60 minutes of activity each day.³

The cost to the economy of physical inactivity is at least £91 million per year.⁴

1 NHS Health Scotland (2012) Costing the burden of ill health related to Physical Inactivity for Scotland.
 2 The Scottish Health Survey 2015
 3 The Scottish Health Survey 2015
 4 NHS Health Scotland (2012) Costing the burden of ill health related to Physical Inactivity for Scotland.

Our Strategy

Our ambitious new strategy will give us the foundations we need to tackle the challenge of physical inactivity and help more people in Scotland to enjoy the multiple benefits of everyday walking.

We believe that everyday walking is the solution to meeting Scotland's inactivity challenge. This is because almost everyone can do it – no matter their age, income, gender or ability. It is the easiest and most accessible form of physical activity. It is free and no special equipment is needed.

We are focussing our efforts in four key areas to make this happen – promoting environments that enable physical activity, walking for health, active travel, and influencing policy and raising awareness through effective communications.

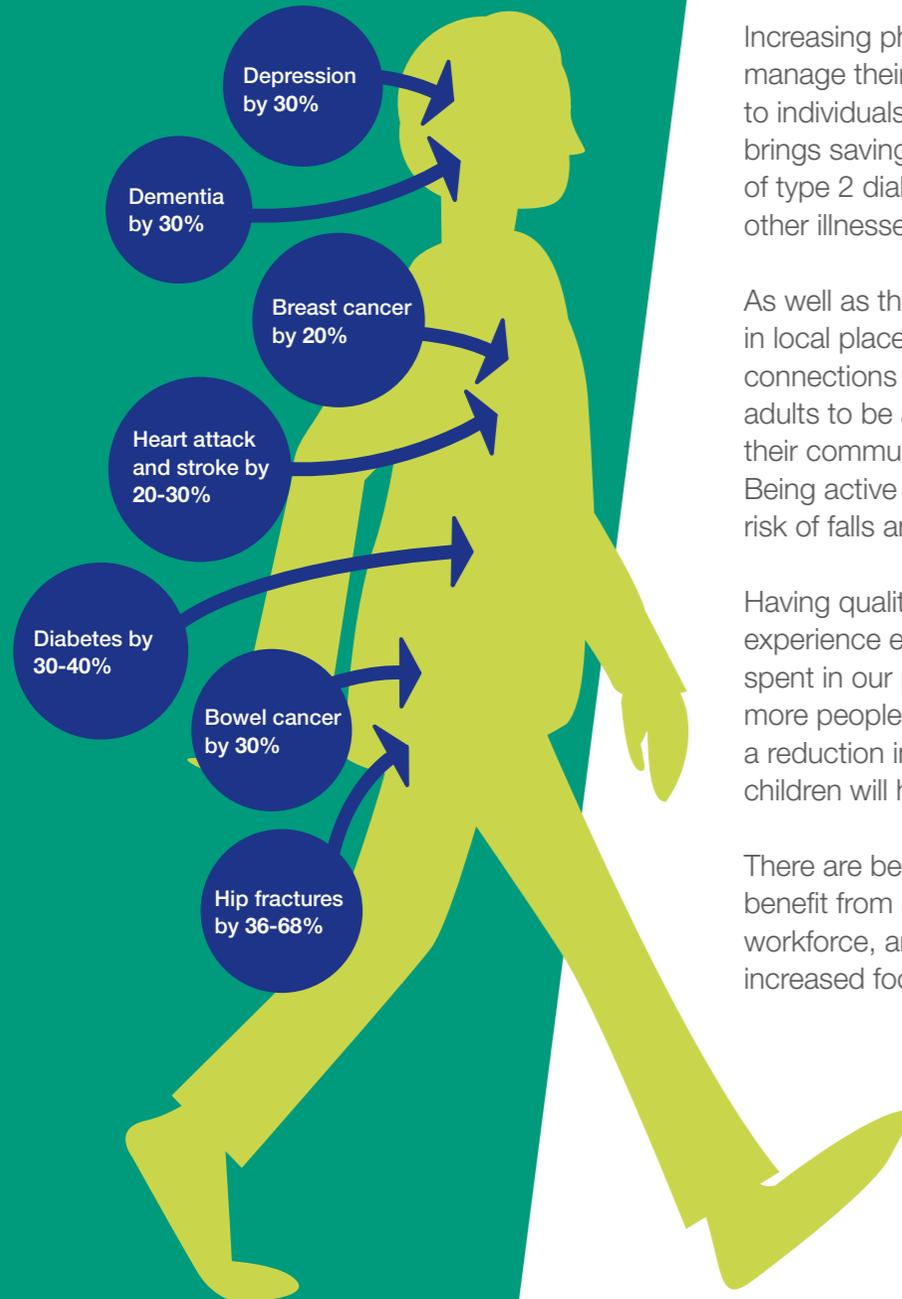
To get Scotland walking our combination of services, projects and products have been designed to influence behaviour change. This is through development of places, opportunity and motivation for people to walk more and be physically active.

We will seek opportunities to work together with our partners and networks to extend our collective reach, give value to our stakeholders and meet mutual outcomes.



The Benefits

A brisk 30 minute walk on five days of the week can reduce the risk of several serious health conditions:



Everyday walking and physical activity brings multiple benefits to people and society. Active people live longer and healthier lives.

Increasing physical activity helps people to manage their weight, bringing health benefits to individuals. Reducing levels of obesity in turn brings savings to the NHS through reduced levels of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses amongst the population.

As well as the physical benefits, walking regularly in local places also enhances people’s social connections and mental health. Supporting older adults to be active with others and connected to their communities reduces isolation and loneliness. Being active through walking also helps to reduce risk of falls and improves mobility in later life.

Having quality, accessible paths lets people experience enhanced wellbeing because of time spent in our parks, woods and greenspaces. If more people walked more often, there would be a reduction in traffic congestion and pollution and children will have safer routes to school.

There are benefits for business too, as employers benefit from a healthier and more productive workforce, and local economies experience increased footfall.

Walking For Health

Our aim

The number of people in Scotland walking every day is increasing, thereby improving wellbeing, reducing health inequalities and preventing ill health.

We believe that everyday walking can be the key to improving the health and wellbeing of the Scottish people.

Our Health Walk programme supports the people who are most inactive to take their first small step towards enjoying the health benefits of physical activity. These walking groups offer short, volunteer led, friendly walks. Our evidence tells us that the social and wellbeing benefits of company and spending time in greenspaces are just as beneficial as the exercise our walkers experience. Our workplace walking resources and challenges and Big Fit Walk events give opportunities, motivation and inspiration for everyone to get involved in walking.

Making it happen

We will expand our Health Walk programme and increase its effectiveness. This will enable thousands of people to take part in supportive, friendly, led, short walks in every local authority across Scotland.

We will continue to develop our Health Walk programme to give targeted support to those who need additional help to become active, including those with cancer and dementia.

We will encourage people to be active in their daily working lives with workplace walking programmes and challenges.

More people in Scotland are aware of the benefits of walking through our walking promotion campaigns, Step Count Challenges and nationwide Big Fit Walk events.

We will work with our partners and wider networks to collaborate on projects and campaigns which meet our mutual outcomes around walking for health.

Active Environments

Our aim

Outdoor environments in Scotland are increasingly welcoming, safe, fit for purpose and encourage increased physical activity.

Access to good quality, well-maintained outdoor spaces can help improve our physical, social and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, take a journey by bike or horse, or simply to enjoy a green or natural environment. Our greenspaces are a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill health. We will therefore work to ensure that everyone has access to good quality, multi-use paths and accessible places to walk and be active.

Making it happen

- We work with local communities to help them improve their local paths.
- We provide training and funding to local communities to help with path improvement and promotion.
- We hold events and publish best practice guidance on creation of multi-use paths.
- Our technical path experts will be on-hand to help anyone who wants to plan, build, promote or maintain paths.

Access to good quality, well-maintained outdoor spaces can help improve our physical, social and mental health

Active Travel

Our aim

More people choose to walk and cycle for everyday short journeys, thereby improving health, creating safer communities and reducing environmental impacts.

Active travel is the way that most people can build some activity into their day by changing a few daily habits – such as walking to work, school or the shops. It is about getting more people more active more often - and in so doing helping to improve physical and mental health, and helping to tackle the inactivity challenge facing Scotland today. Increased active travel reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality. It reduces our energy use, helps create robust local economies and supports communities where people feel connected to each other.

Making it happen

- We manage the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places fund, enabling local authorities to access large grants for implementation of active and sustainable travel behaviour change programmes.
- We will support delivery and implementation of the Cycle Action Plan for Scotland and the wider Active Travel Vision.
- We will promote good practice that encourages walking for everyday journeys.
- We will develop and support programmes to increase everyday active journeys.
- We will develop resources and campaign materials to promote walking in everyday contexts, such as promotion of journeys to school, work or the shops.

Policy and Communications

Our aim

More people are aware of the benefits of everyday walking, physical activity and how to take part. There is an increasing focus on physical activity within policy and practice at national and local levels.

Increasing awareness of the challenges of physical inactivity and the benefits of walking at all levels is vital. We aim to ensure that policy makers are informed, have evidence and are clear of the measures they must take to improve the health of our nation. Our work spans policy areas including health, transport, environment and community development – these cross-cutting benefits throughout society underline the importance of our work.

We will raise awareness of the benefits of walking and physical activity and promote our services through integrated media campaigns. We will tell the stories of how walking can change people's lives. We will use our partners and wide network of friends and volunteers to cascade our communications messages widely.

Making it happen

- We will continue to be a strong and recognised voice for the promotion of physical activity, active travel and fit for purpose environments in Scotland.
- We will provide key evidence and arguments to influence policy positively at a national level.
- We will increase the profile of physical activity and the benefits of everyday walking.
- We will be a key delivery and facilitation partner in the Scottish Government's Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, National Walking Strategy and Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.
- We will work together to reach out to more people, engaging with them on and offline to spread awareness of the support we offer and the benefits of walking in daily lives.
- We will seek partnership opportunities to further our strategy and be recognised as a partner of choice.
- We will increase the profile of walking through national campaigns and an integrated communications approach.



Increasing awareness of the challenges of physical inactivity and the benefits of walking at all levels is vital.



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