



Image credit: Ceartas Advocacy

# Walk and Roll:

## Ensuring Health Walks are accessible to people who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters and mobility aids

**Paths for All** worked in partnership with **Get Out Get Active (GOGA) Tayside** to produce this guide, aimed at supporting Health Walk projects looking to make their activities accessible to people who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters and mobility aids and to support those thinking about starting Health Walk projects.



We would like to thank the following organisations and groups who have shared their expertise:

- Ceartas Walk 'n' Roll**
- Cumbernauld Walk 'n' Roll**
- Highland Disabled Ramblers**
- Parklea Branching Out**
- Scottish Disability Sport**
- West Dunbartonshire CVS**



**Alternative formats are available on request**

Get in touch with us via [info@pathsforall.org.uk](mailto:info@pathsforall.org.uk) or call 01786 641851

# Why it matters

Making Health Walks more accessible for people of all abilities to be active together



## The context

- 74% of wheelchair users would like to **participate in more physical activity** and sport
- The top barrier to taking part in wheelchair physical activity and sport is **lack of opportunity**
- By providing [Health Walks](#) which are suitable for people of all abilities to be active together we can **create opportunity while benefiting participants and providers!**

Stats source: [WheelPower Survey](#)

## The difference it makes to participants and providers

Physical activity in general makes us **happier** and more **connected**.

More inclusive activity can:

- Positively impact **social skills, communication** and **confidence** for **all participants** while creating a sense of **belonging**
- Enable providers to reach a wider audience, bringing **access to new funding streams** and an opportunity to **develop and improve** the skillset of those delivering activities

Source: [Active Together report](#)

## The guidelines

- These infographics for [Adults and Older Adults](#) and [Adults with a disability](#) show us why it is important to move more on a daily basis
- Moderate intensity physical activity (which raises heart and breathing rate while making you warmer - where you could talk but not sing) is encouraged - but any activity is beneficial!
- On two days of the week, it is also recommended that all adults should undertake activities to support their strength and balance

Source: [CMO Physical Activity Guidelines](#)

## Check it out...

- [This video](#) from Scottish Health Walk Network members, **Ceartas** (based in East Dunbartonshire), showcases the difference their "Walk 'n' Roll" project has made to their participants
- Access the [Activity Alliance's research portal](#) for more evidence and context

www.



# Choosing your route

Use this quick guide to inform your route planning and risk assessment process



## Better with...

As with all Health Walks, an ideal route should be **accessible**, **convenient** for participants to get to, offer an **attractive** environment and make use of well-established and **connected** paths.

The following will help to make your activity more accessible to wheelchair, mobility scooter and mobility aid users - remember, though, it is **key to 'ask your audience' from the outset** as they will know best what works for them:

- **A variety of routes / options** - ensuring you have risk assessed routes which may offer a variety of longer or shorter options will help to make your activity suitable for a wider audience
- **'Pause points'** - these enable separate groups of participants to catch up, chat, and maybe even take in a particular view of interest (these are a great opportunity to offer Strength and Balance exercises which can be done standing or seated - supports may be required for standing exercises)
- **Buddies** - those who provide support (either formally or informally) to individuals who face barriers to accessing Health Walks should be welcomed to attend and encourage opportunities to be active together. If an individual requires 1:1 support to participate, you may wish to explore the creation of a specific volunteer role or reaching out to another local organisation who may be able to provide this support (your local Third Sector Interface may be able to help)
- **Wider paths** - allow people to walk or wheel alongside each other; making it easier for everyone to participate and make things more sociable too
- **Access to an accessible toilet** - great to have on any route, but particularly important if you are offering a post-walk social opportunity ([Changing Places Toilet Map](#) can help)
- **Disabled parking spaces** - consider availability for those transporting a mobility scooter or wheelchair

## Check it out...

- .....
- [Euan's Guide](#) is a disabled access review site where disabled people, their family, friends and carers can find and share reviews on the accessibility of venues (including walking routes) around the UK and beyond.
  - [AccessAble](#) is another accessibility guide, searchable by postcode
  - [Accessible Walks Scotland](#) also highlights wheelchair-accessible walking routes

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## Better without...

- **Steep inclines and declines** - most wheelchairs are unstable on steep inclines and declines and can act in uncontrollable ways
- **Pronounced cambers and crossfalls** - can cause wheelchairs and mobility scooters to tip over
- **Steps, inaccessible gates or barriers** - avoid routes with steps and check that gates and barriers are suitable for wheelchair and mobility scooter users to move through or around
- **Tricky kerbs** - make sure that there are dropped kerbs on each side of the pavement on any road crossing or onto any lower level surface
- **Potholes and tree roots** - you should check that any potholes or tree roots can be safely negotiated
- **Uneven, loose gravel or muddy surfaces** - choose routes with smooth, flat, firm surfaces
- **Street obstacles** - such as 'A' boards, wheelie bins, cones and bollards
- **Busy roads** - choose routes that avoid busy main roads. If you have to cross a busy road always use a designated crossing point.

## Consider and communicate



- **Share as much route information as you can beforehand** - this could include documenting and photographing/filming some of your route (with particular focus on any unavoidable obstacles) and sending these on so participants can make an informed decision before participating
- **Considerations will vary** - participants using manual chairs may be able to self-propel without assistance or may require assistance in certain contexts (e.g. when tackling inclines) or at all times, others using powered wheelchairs (which can be wider and heavier) may find some gates a particular barrier - bear this in mind when planning and risk assessing potential routes
- **Ask for input from participants and volunteers** - mobility scooter, wheelchair or mobility aid users may be willing to support your route planning and risk assessment efforts and can share what they know works or doesn't work for them
- **Think about punctures, power, speed and distance** - check that powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters are fully charged and that their users, and other participants, keep a safe distance apart while maintaining a pace which allows for easy conversation; remind wheelchair users to carry puncture repair kits
- **Keep an eye out for dogs** - who can sometimes get in the way or get in a tangle!

# Risk assessment

How risk assessments can help better inform your participants



## What resources are there to help?

- Paths for All make risk assessment templates available to all those who have completed our Walk Leader training (see the Walk Leader Training Manual) or the [Member Area](#) on our website for more ([find out how to become a member](#))
- A COVID-19 specific risk assessment template is also available via our [Member Area](#)

## Sharing the work of our Network

- [Ceartas](#), deliverers of regular Walk and Rolls in East Dunbartonshire, **recommend taking photos of areas of caution/obstacles to add to risk assessments** - enabling prospective participants to make an informed decision about participation and/or raise any concerns
- Below are some examples of obstacles identified on one of Ceartas' Walk 'n' Roll routes, shared with their permission and our thanks. You can access one of their [full risk assessments](#) (which includes these and their mitigations) and use this to inform your own assessments.



**Left:** Parked vehicles can obstruct pavement



**Right:** Uneven surface

Image credit: Ceartas

- [West Dunbartonshire CVS](#) have created 'photographic route' videos to enable prospective participants to assess the route beforehand which you can find [on their dedicated microsite](#)



Image credit: WDCVS

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- [Living Streets' Healthier Safer Streets audits](#) from Perth and Kinross (complete with pictures) highlight some key issues to look out for
- Living Streets Walking Connects [Guide to Getting Better Streets and Pavements](#)

# More to offer

Use these resources to introduce and promote wider physical, nature-based and local activity opportunities



## On your walk and rolls

- **Strength and Balance / Chair Based Exercise** - offering this type of activity can enable separate groups of participants an opportunity to pause, catch up, and engage in something different whilst moving more in their own way and working towards the physical activity guidelines - **GOGA Tayside** have produced an [activity sheet](#) and [demonstration video](#) to support this type of activity
- **Connecting with Nature** - think about ways to encourage your participants to engage more with the natural world during activity. Projects have shared that inspiring budding photographers on the walks can help people to engage with nature and each other, bringing other benefits (our mini guides on [Noticing Nature](#) and being [Kind to Nature](#) might also help spark some ideas)
- **Tap into and share local knowledge** - use the group's pooled knowledge to promote local accessible venues / opportunities such as cafes, destinations etc (or find them through [Euan's Guide](#) / [AccessAble](#))



## Other useful resources

- [Adapt to Perform](#) and [Ella's Wheelchair Workouts](#) are YouTube channels providing wheelchair workouts for use at home
- [Skye for All](#) - Focused on Skye, Sarah and Melanie's website showcases what can be done on a local level to assess and share the accessibility of routes, places of interest and amenities for those who use mobility aids - you can also visit their [YouTube channel](#) to see videos of accessible routes they have identified
- **Paths for All's** [One Minute Movers](#) include two seated exercises developed in consultation with wheelchair users from Scottish Disability Sport

## Check it out...



Sarah Lister from Skye for All won our **Active Travel Volunteer of the Year** in 2020 for highlighting accessible path links throughout Skye.

[Read about Skye for All and watch the video.](#)

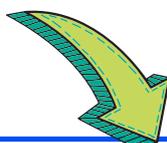
# Spread the word

Use these top tips to help you effectively promote your activity



## Use positive messages

- Research suggests that physical activity messages should focus on the **short-term mental** and **social health benefits** (e.g. "move to feel good")
- This [blog and infographic](#) outlines examples for different audiences identified by the Physical Activity and Health Research Centre



## Add inclusive language and imagery

- Choose language and imagery which makes it clear your group welcomes wheelchair, mobility scooter and mobility aid users. For example, two projects within our Network have named their groups "**Walk 'n' Roll**"!
- The Activity Alliance [Talk to Me 10 Principles](#) as well as the [Activity Alliance Guide to Inclusive Marketing and Communications](#) and [Scotland's Inclusive Communication Hub](#) can help you

## Provide the chance to connect

- Ensure you provide a variety of ways prospective participants can contact you to ask any questions, and encourage people to reach out - being able to make contact prior to attending an activity can **allay fears, build confidence** and help people **make informed decisions**!
- Link in with relevant local organisations such as Leisure Trusts, residential services for people with disabilities, shopmobility organisations, the Care Inspectorate, student clubs, third sector interfaces and local charities to help spread the word
- **Tweet and share with us [@PathsForAll](#)!**



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## Check it out...

Research: [Disability, the communication of physical activity and sedentary behaviour, and ableism: a call for inclusive messages](#)

# Broaden your knowledge

where you can go to learn more



## Some further reading

- [Countryside For All Guide](#) - a guide to disabled people's access to the outdoors from the Fieldfare Trust (currently being updated reviewed and updated)
- [By All Reasonable Means: Least Restrictive Access to the Outdoors](#) has been developed by Natural Resources Wales and the Sensory Trust to help ensure that access to the countryside and open spaces is equally available to people of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds.
- [The Path Manager's Guide to Grading](#) - Paths for All worked with NatureScot and Forest and Land Scotland to produce a standard waymarked path grading system for Scotland which includes a symbol for paths which meet the Countryside For All access standard.
- [Guidance from Public Health England](#) regarding the findings of a review, analysis and research aimed at understanding the enablers, barriers & opportunities for increasing physical activity across inequality groups
- [Inclusive & Accessible events guide, VisitScotland](#) highlights a number of considerations for those looking to deliver more inclusive events / activities

## Look out for...

Further opportunities to learn are coming soon and we'll be in touch with the Network to let you know about:



- Scottish Disability Sport's new e-learning inclusion module
- Paths for All and Scottish Disability Sport's new Disability Inclusion Training (which will be shared on our [training page](#))
- The updated [Countryside for All](#) Guide when it launches
- Phase 2 of this guide - which will include case studies from projects and participants as well as promotional resources for use



## Could you help us?

We will be continuing to further develop this toolkit to include case studies, promotional materials and learning opportunities.

If you would like to help us by sharing a case study, either from existing work or having used this toolkit, please reach out on our **SHWN Slack channel** or email [info@pathsforall.org.uk](mailto:info@pathsforall.org.uk)

