

Walk Back Better

A manifesto for 2021

We want everyone in Scotland to benefit from regular walking.



Regular walking can dramatically improve our physical, mental, and social health. By providing opportunities and environments for people to walk regularly we will move forward from this pandemic to a healthier, cleaner, safer and happier walking nation.

We need your support to make this happen!
We are calling on our politicians to:



1. Deliver better access to walking for everyone

- Invest in a **£50m infrastructure** fund annually to develop local walking routes, long distance routes, green neighbourhood networks and support under pressure mountain locations. This fund would be supported by a job creation and skills programme, to maximise local economic benefits and develop the capacity to deliver.
- Improve walking and wheeling conditions in communities through **investing in better design standards**, supporting the work of authorities, tackling obstructions on pavements, providing toilets, seating, signage, safety improvements, improved crossings and basic path and pavement maintenance.

2. Make walking easy and enjoyable

- **Promote awareness**, accessibility and use of the nation's paths / routes through mapping, information and promotion for locals and visitors.
- **20-minute neighbourhoods**: ensure the planning system prioritises and delivers development within walking distance of local facilities.
- **Increase investment** for delivery of walking behaviour change programmes that particularly target the most vulnerable and help to reduce inequalities.

PEDESTRIAN
ZONE



3. Ensure walking is safe in every community

- **Protect pedestrians** with a national speed limit of 20mph in all cities, towns, villages including city residential areas and shopping streets – and implement and enforce pavement parking legislation.
- **Invest in promoting walking to school** and reducing traffic and pollution outside school gates.



A third of us in Scotland aren't currently active enough, which has a huge impact on our health and wellbeing. Walking is the best way for many of us to be more active, especially if we're active outdoors in nature which brings particular benefits. Being physically active can dramatically **improve our physical, mental, and social health.**

The economic benefits associated with increased physical activity levels far outweigh any initial costs. Walking is often said to be **'the Best Buy in Public Health'**. Cost Benefit Ratios for walking developments show significant value for money with a Social Return on Investment (SROI) evidence showing a return of approximately **£8 for every £1** invested in health walks and path development projects. Visit Scotland states that the walking market generates up to **£1.26 billion** to the Scottish economy.

Over the course of the Coronavirus pandemic, many of us found joy in simply going for a short, local walk. During lockdown, a survey showed **71% of adults visited the outdoors at least once a week** and this had risen to **80% by August 2020**. The moment of 'pause' that lockdown brought helped us consider how we want our communities and country to look like in the future.

Less traffic, cleaner and safer streets, time to spend in nature, and walking to keep our minds and bodies happy and healthy.

We want the increase in walking seen during lockdown to continue and grow going forward.

By supporting and enabling people to walk more, every day, we can make **progress towards tackling some of Scotland's biggest challenges**: climate change, growing health inequalities, poor public health and wellbeing, and biodiversity loss.

We believe walking and wheeling should be a significant factor in how we 'build back better' from Covid-19. Currently **between 34.5% and 41% of space in Scotland's cities is dedicated to cars**. This needs to change to prioritise people. We want people to walk and wheel (e.g. wheelchair) as the natural choice for getting around – from their early years across their life into active ageing. We want to enable people to choose walking for recreation (including tourism), taking advantage of our fantastic natural and green spaces and the benefits that come with spending time in them.

Walking should be as **pleasant, safe, and convenient as possible.**

Improving conditions for walking and increasing opportunities for people to walk can bring a range of benefits to everyday lives; to health, safety, access to services and social contact, including a sense of community whether in an urban or rural area as well as promoting diversity and inclusion. Walking in a group is particularly good for our mental health and for boosting social contact, and these group activities should be supported.

From continuing to encourage local walking for 'daily exercise' to supporting people to walk for short journeys to the shops, to work, to schools or link to public transport, to going from sofa to summit we will move forward from this pandemic to a healthier, cleaner, safer and happier walking nation.

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This manifesto has been developed by:



www.livingstreets.org.uk

We believe that getting Scotland Walking means progress for everyone.

We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illness and social isolation, and making walking the natural choice.

We work with professionals and politicians to enable every community to enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.



www.pathsforall.org.uk

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

Our aim is to significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk in Scotland - whether that's leisure walking or active-choice walking to work, school or shops.

We work to create more opportunities and better environments not just for walking, but also for cycling and other activities, to help make Scotland a more active, more prosperous, greener country.



www.ramblers.org.uk

Ramblers Scotland is the representative body for walkers in Scotland, recognised by sportscotland as a governing body of sport.

We protect and promote everyone's access to Scotland's outdoors and stand up for the places we love to walk.

We are a membership organisation with 54 local walking groups, who run 3,500 group walks a year led by 1,200 volunteers.

For more data on walking go to Walkipedia www.walkipedia.scot