

Walking the way to Health



Walking for Life! has produced a model for developing Walking the way to Health which can be applied either from a strategic countywide level to an individual walking group perspective. The model classifies Walking the way to Health into three different levels of walk.

It was formed following completion of an audit across Shropshire which identified that although there were a number of successful Walking the way to Health groups across the county, there was an uneven proportion that were over one hour long and aimed at a more experienced walker.

Walking for Life! has used this model to identify the development needs for Walking the Way to Health in Shropshire, with the aim of ensuring as many people as possible have access to all three different levels of walks:



Explanation of Levels:

Entry Level 1:

- Walks are under 30 minutes
- Easy terrain
- No stiles
- Pavements or well maintained rights of way

Entry Level 1 walks have been set up in specific locations that enable them to be easily accessed by those at greatest need of support.

For example a number of the Entry Level 1 walks start from the sheltered housing community rooms so they are easily accessible by older people e.g. Sheltered Housing Schemes in Minsterley, Worthen and Shrewsbury.

Other possible settings to work with to set up Entry Level 1 walks are Day Centres for Adults with Learning Disabilities, and organisations such as Age Concern and the Alzheimer's Society.

Entry Level 2:

- Walks are between 30 – 60 minutes
- Mostly easy terrain
- Very few stiles and alternative routes for those who cannot manage stiles
- Well maintained rights of way
- Offer short cuts if required

Entry Level 2 are the typical 'Walking the way to Health' groups that offer short walks which cater for a wide range of abilities.

These are the most common type of walks set up in local communities that are not targeted at a specific setting or population of people. Shropshire has had huge success setting these groups up in villages across the county which already have a strong community through which to promote the group e.g. Hadnall, Pontesbury and Shawbury.

Next Steps

- Walks over 60 minutes
- Easy to moderate terrain
- Stiles
- Wide use of rights of way





Next Steps walks don't specifically fit into the Walking the way to Health accreditation criteria as they are over 60 minutes long. However, Walking for Life! recognised the importance of the Next Steps groups as progression opportunities for walkers, and 'stepping stones' onto other walking groups such as The Ramblers.

Walking for Life! recommends that 'Next Steps' walks form part of a Walking the way to Health scheme as long as the group also has an Entry Level 1 and/ or Entry Level 2 walk available for beginners.

A number of groups in Shropshire initially set up Entry Level 2 walks, and then when there was demand they organised monthly Next Steps walks for individuals who have improved their fitness and want to be a bit more adventurous.

It must be remembered that Walking the way to Health's focus is on individuals who are at greatest need of support to enable them increase their levels of physical activity. For this reason Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 2 walks must be at the heart of any Walking the way to Health group.

Progression through the levels

The arrows in the Walking the way to Health Model indicate movement of people. Individuals may progress through the levels as their health, fitness and confidence improves. Alternatively it offers people an opportunity to continue to walk but at an easier level if required.

For supporting documents please refer to 'Walking for Life! Toolkit' CD

Walking the way to Health groups across Shropshire

Walking for Health Schemes

- ◆ Year 1
- ▲ Year 2

