

#57 AN EVALUATION OF THE WALKING FOR WELLNESS PROJECT AND THE BEFRIENDER ROLE

NATURAL ENGLAND

Report, 2013

Topic for advocacy HEPA - Physical Activity and Health and Local clubs

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4853061788893184>

Description of the good example

Walking for Health is a national programme of volunteer-led health walks, coordinated through Natural England and endorsed by the NHS as a means of promoting physical activity in the sedentary population. Walking for Wellness is a pilot project that has sought to widen access to Walking for Health in Northumberland and to pilot a new befriender role supporting the engagement of people with mental health needs in health walks. The report presents findings from an evaluation of the Walking for Wellness project, conducted by Centre for Health Promotion Research, Leeds Metropolitan University. It presents evidence about engagement in walking groups and the social and health outcomes that can result from participation.

Target - Who can best use this example or document?

Local government, third sector organisations, planners, Department of Health.

**All information in this entry is sourced from the link above and contact mentioned in the document.*

Highlights and outcomes

Why could it be useful for your organisation and advocacy?

The results of this work highlights the value in proactive recruitment of people with a wide range of health needs and the importance of the social dynamics of walking groups in supporting and encouraging individual participants. It also highlights the potential for Walking for Health as a mechanism to assist people with mental health needs.

Learning points - What can we learn from it?

The report shows that elements of social capital, such as trust and social participation can affect the promotion of physical activity over and beyond physical characteristics of the environment. The report has provided some strong evidence about social processes within groups and how these processes reflect in changes in health results. The report also illustrates the importance of the engagement of volunteers in health-promoting activities and shows how to run a volunteer-led health walk schemes.

Further information

Natural England
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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>