

What motivates people to participate in organised walking activity?

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What motivates people to participate in organised walking activity?

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Project details

This report results from research commissioned by Natural England in order to explore people's motivations for participating in organised walking activity. The work was undertaken by the following team: Hazel Hynds and Cheryl Allibone.

A summary of the findings covered by this report, as well as Natural England's views on this research, can be found within Natural England Research Information Note RIN028 – What motivates people to participate in organised walking activity?

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What motivates people to participate in organised walking activity?

Summary

This research report is the result of a small scale qualitative study, designed and implemented by Hazel Hynds, Social and Economic Evidence Team and Cheryl Allibone, Healthy Walking Team, in March 2009, to explore people's motivations for participating in organised walking activity.

It will be of interest to both national and regional colleagues in Natural England's Healthy Walking Team and colleagues in Social and Economic Evidence Team.

It summarises the findings around:

- motivations for walking;
- influential factors;
- walker preferences;
- walker aspirations; and
- implications for Walking for Health (WfH) progression and WfH expansion programme.

The aim of the research was to: "find out what motivates individuals to participate in organised walking activity".

With specific objectives to understand:

- why people start walking with organised walking groups;
- what keeps people walking with organised walking groups;
- what people particularly like/dislike about certain types of walks; and
- what types of walk people would like to do more of.

The results of this study and the findings of similar research show that overall 'social contact' is the key motivator for participation in organised walking activity. However, the combination of social contact; improving health; and enjoying the natural environment; coupled with the external influences of lifestyle and background, effects both initial and sustained participation in organised walking activity.

Being out in the natural environment and discovering new places is important for WfH participants: both progression and expansion activities need to focus on developing participants connection with the natural environment by providing more opportunities for close contact with nature; increasing knowledge and awareness of the environment and environmental issues; and encouraging sustainable behaviours.

The current profile of WfH participants, walk types and walk timings may all be factors in preventing a wider range of people to get involved: both progression and expansion activities need to consider how to broaden opportunities for participation and the integration of new members.

The findings of this research will inform and shape the development of both WfH progression and expansion.

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1 Introduction

Walking for Health (WfH)

- 1.1 Natural England's Walking for Health scheme is the largest national body promoting and setting the standards for led health walks. WfH aims to encourage people to take regular short health walks in their local communities, particularly sedentary people and those in relatively poor health. Natural England supports a network of local health walk schemes across England, offering support and advice, training for walk leaders, public liability insurance, an accreditation quality mark, evaluation, and free materials to help promote walking.
- 1.2 Launched in 2000, WfH now supports more than 525 led health walk schemes, over 2,500 walks per week and in excess of 25,000 regular walkers every week.



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Plate 1 Cannock Chase Explorer Walk

- 1.3 The profile of participants in WfH walking schemes varies. Some schemes are targeted at a specific demographic, such as mothers & toddlers or Asian women. However, the data Natural England has collected to date indicates that the majority of walkers are over 55 (around 80%); female (around 70%), and White British (around 85%).

Expansion of WfH

- 1.4 Natural England is working in partnership with the Department of Health to expand WfH over the next 3 years (2009 - 2012) to achieve a four-fold expansion of participation in WfH. The main aims are to help tackle health problems associated with modern lifestyles where people often take too little exercise and to help people develop an appreciation of their local natural environment.

Progression from WfH

- 1.5 Natural England is developing an initiative to enable participants who have moved through starter and intermediate walks to progress onto more vigorous activity, including longer walks and other activities in the natural environment such as volunteering. The programme will offer a structured pathway for sustainable behaviour change, leading to continuing contact between participants and the natural environment.

Research need

- 1.6 The Social and Economic Evidence Team was commissioned by the Healthy Walking Team to design and deliver a short study to explore people's attitudes, motivations and behaviours in relation to organised walking activity. The purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of why people walk and their experiences of organised walking activity in order to help shape WfH progression.

Research question

- 1.7 Given the limited time and budget for this exploratory work, a small scale and focussed piece of research was agreed upon.
- 1.8 The aim of the research was to: "find out what motivates individuals to participate in organised walking activity".
- 1.9 With specific objectives to understand:
- why people start walking with organised walking groups;
 - what keeps people walking with organised walking groups;
 - what people particularly like/dislike about certain types of walks; and
 - what types of walk people would like to do more of.

2 Methodology

Choice of research method

- 2.1 It was agreed that focus groups would be the most effective way to explore our research question. This technique is a useful way to explore the reasons behind what people think and feel about a given subject. The group setting often results in a more reflective discussion and considered responses from participants. Also, this approach enabled us to reach a large number of walkers within the time available rather than undertaking individual depth interviews.

Sample

- 2.2 Focus group participants were selected from urban walking groups, because the majority of walking groups are based in urban areas, and this is also where over 80% of the population of the country lives. We chose London and Birmingham as the areas to sample, being a reasonable geographical split. The sample was deliberately split between two types of walkers: 'experienced walkers', those that had been walking for more than 18 months and 'new walkers', those that had been walking for less than six months, in order to see if there were any obvious differences in their motivations for walking.
- 2.3 Participants were selected by Natural England Walking for Health (WfH) contacts in the regions through walk leaders who canvassed local Scheme Coordinators for volunteers among their walkers.

Make-up of focus groups

- 2.4 The focus groups comprised of 29 people in total - 58% women and 42% men, and were aged between 35 and 84 years. The majority of participants were white British, retired and over the age of 60 (see Appendix 1 for further detail about participants). We had hoped that people wouldn't know each other in the groups (that they were from different schemes and walks) but unfortunately this was not the case and in each focus group, most people knew at least one other person. However this did not appear to affect the sessions.

Design of focus group sessions

- 2.5 The design process involved consultative discussions with representatives of the Healthy Walking Team to establish what they wanted to know. We decided to look at three areas; walking motivations, walking likes and dislikes, and walking wishes for the future. As our areas of interest were very specific, we decided to divide the focus groups into discreet sessions that would address each of the three areas. As well as ensuring the sessions were productive, we wanted participants to enjoy the experience. We therefore used a range of different techniques to ensure the sessions would be 'interactive' and interesting. These included: paired discussions; post-it ordering and themed exercises; flip chart and feedback work and storytelling, to ensure that everyone was involved and had the opportunity to contribute.

Confidentiality and ethics

- 2.6 Informed consent was gained from all the focus group participants at the beginning of each session. This included permission to audio record the session, take photos and contact them again for the purpose of further research (see Appendix 3 for consent form).

Delivery of focus group sessions

- 2.7 In total we held four focus groups (two in Birmingham City Centre and two in Croydon) with six to eight participants in each, with each session lasting approximately two hours. The topic guide was amended after the first focus group to allow more time for people to describe the walks they currently went on and to add an extra comfort break.
- 2.8 Attendance was high; out of a possible 31 people, 29 people turned up (93%). At each location we held one session for new walkers and one for experienced walkers. Three Natural England staff attended each session: two facilitators and one assistant to deal with domestics and administration. All participants seemed positive and participated in each exercise with apparent enthusiasm. The various exercises generated a lot of data, plus the audio recording of each session. All participants received a gift card voucher and the session finished with lunch (see Appendix 2 for focus group topic guide).

Limitations of the research

- 2.9 This research project comprised a relatively small-scale, cross-sectional study of WfH participants. However, in light of our research aims and objectives, the breadth and depth of the research was considered to be appropriate. The findings are based on the views of 29 walkers who took part in focus groups; a brief literature review; our interpretation of these findings and what they might mean for WfH progression and expansion.

Thematic analysis

- 2.10 The material generated from the four focus groups was transcribed using external transcription services. These transcripts were then reviewed in order to draw out themes and sub-themes to develop a thematic framework. Using the framework, transcripts were coded and verbatim segments were moved into the relevant themed tables in order to organise the data for analysis (see Appendices 4 and 5 for thematic framework and themed tables).

3 Related research findings

- 3.1 A number of different studies have focused upon outdoor physical activity. For the purpose of this study we focussed on research that looked specifically at people's motivations for taking part in organised outdoor physical activity and/or the benefits of participating in organised outdoor physical activity. A summary of the research findings are presented below and discussed in further detail in the 'findings' and 'discussion and conclusions' sections of this report.
- 3.2 Ashley and Bartlett (2001) looked at the motivations of those who participated in a community-based exercise programme emphasising brisk walking activity and the benefits they derived. They discovered that in addition to physical fitness, the countryside and social aspects of the walks were important motivating factors. The average number of walks taken each month was only three, yet participants perceived that there were health benefits. The majority of the participants were women, in higher social classes and over 50 years of age, indicating the efficacy of this type of activity for older participants.
- 3.3 Barton, Griffin and Pretty (2008) carried out research to evaluate the effectiveness of a new, six week, green exercise intervention programme on psychological health parameters. They compared the findings to two other interventions that didn't involve green exercise. All the participants were members of local Mind associations. The various groups were: green exercise group - walking (outdoor environment + exercise), swimming group (indoor environment + exercise), somebody cares club - social activities (indoor environment + no exercise). Their key findings were that there was a significant improvement in self esteem in all groups, but change was significantly greater in the green exercise group compared with somebody cares; significant improvement in total mood disturbance in all groups, but greatest in swimming group, smallest in the Somebody Cares Club; members who attended all 6 sessions reported higher self esteem and overall mood than those who attended less; the green exercise group experienced the most number of participant increases in self-esteem overall; and the importance of social contact.
- 3.4 Cameron-Daum (2008) explored the reasons why people walked as a leisure activity. The themes most commonly arising were: walking to be closer to nature, the senses including kinaesthesia, well-being and therapy, the social and the solitary, nostalgia, romance and the historical. The study found that, for most people, walking in nature provides a sense of well-being and the opportunity to recover their physiological, psychological and social equilibrium. The study also found that walking for pleasure in the countryside and on coastal footpaths tends to be done by the white, self-perceived-middle-classes.
- 3.5 Peacock, Hine and Pretty (2007) carried out research which looked at outdoor physical activity versus indoor physical activity. Twenty members of local Mind associations took part in two walks in contrasting environments to test the impact on self-esteem, mood and enjoyment. The green, outdoor walk was around Belhus Woods Country Park in Essex, which has a varied landscape of woodlands, grasslands and lakes. The indoor walk was around a shopping centre in Essex. The findings demonstrated that exercising outdoors in a green environment is more effective in enhancing mood and improving self esteem compared to the equivalent amount of exercise indoors. They also found that participants enjoyed the scenery and exercise more in the green outdoor walk. They also enjoyed being in the company of other people and doing something different more in the green environment.
- 3.6 A study by O'Brien and Morris (2009) to evaluate the Active England Programme, found two primary motivations for project users to get involved: socialising and meeting new people; and the chance to become more active to improve health. They also found that users identified the key benefits of getting involved in regular, organised and led activities as: socialising; contact with nature; mental and physical health improvements; a sense of achievement and self-improvement; enjoyment and positive influence on other areas of life.

- 3.7 A small scale study by Walk 4 Health (2006) showed that the majority of walkers were white women aged between 61-70. They found that social reasons were more influential motivators than health and fitness motivators to start health walking and that the most commonly cited benefits of health walking were 'meeting new people', 'feeling of wellbeing' and 'going to new places'. This study concluded that social reasons are the major motivators in starting to walk. However, with many long term walkers and few new 'recruits' there are indicators that group dynamics are barriers to encouraging new walkers. Consideration must be given to ensure these barriers are removed and more effort should be directed at attracting younger people and people from more diverse backgrounds.

4 Findings

- 4.1 This section of the report describes and discusses the findings from the focus groups. It focuses upon motivations for walking, key influencing factors, walker preferences and walker aspirations.

Motivations for walking

- 4.2 There didn't appear to be any noticeable differences in relation to walking motivators between new walkers and experienced walkers. Nor did there appear to be any noticeable differences in what makes people start walking compared to what keeps them walking.
- 4.3 Social contact, improving health and enjoying the natural environment were consistently identified as the key motivators for initial, and continued participation in organised walking activity, by participants in all four focus groups. These findings are supported by the work of Ashley and Bartlett (2001) who found that physical fitness, the countryside and the social aspects of walks were all important motivating factors.
- 4.4 Overall the 'social' element came across as the strongest motivator for walking, as it was most frequently cited and discussed by participants. However, the importance of the mix of the three elements did vary between individuals. Improving health and enjoyment of natural environment came out as being fairly equally weighted in terms of their importance as motivators. The three individual elements are discussed in more detail below.

Social contact

- 4.5 The social side of belonging to a walking group appears to be a key motivator for people to participate in organised walking activity. Walking groups provide people with opportunities to get out, mix with like-minded people and make friends. This is a finding supported by the research undertaken by Walk 4 Health (2006) which also found that social reasons were more influential motivators than health and fitness motivators to start health walking.
- 4.6 Involvement in WfH enables participants to make meaningful connections with others. The evidence shows there is a mutual trust and understanding amongst walking group participants. They rely on each other for support and often feel a strong bond with other members of the group. There is a great deal of loyalty from walkers toward their groups and this is demonstrated by regular attendance and a desire not to 'let others down'. This 'commitment', may be related to the age profile of walkers, because they are perhaps of a generation where it is less acceptable to let others down. WfH provides participants with a sense of belonging and identity, this may be due to similarity in the age of walkers, as they are likely to have more in common and share the same values. WfH can therefore play a vital role in building social capital and community cohesion.

...I think the thing that I like most about belonging to a group is, I don't know whether it's our generation and I don't mean this offensively at all, I'm not sure if perhaps younger people give the commitment that we as an older group give, but for me I like the commitment of having said "Yes, I will join this group", and the fact that I mightn't really feel up to it one day but if I don't go so-and-so will ring me up and they'll say..., and I'll think "It's a shame for them to ring me". And that to me is most important...

- 4.7 We found that one of the most important elements of being in contact with other people is knowledge sharing and learning new things. This was often quoted during the sessions, such as sharing recipes, learning the names of various plants or finding out what's on offer in the supermarket, this benefit seemed to be highly valued by participants.

... I've learned things about an area within 4 miles of where I live, I've lived all my life, that I didn't know: little things, little geography things, little history things. I've learned more about plants...

- 4.8 People also indicated how much they enjoyed and valued the extended social activities that came with belonging to a walking group. Socialising with fellow walkers outside normal walking activity, for example, going to the pub after a walk or meeting up on special occasions like Christmas for lunch.

...I do go on a walker's club with a group of men, that's usually about 10 to 12 miles... and we finish up at a pub for a meal, which we quite look forward to...

- 4.9 It was evident that walking groups provide a support network to those who participate, and can help people get back into becoming sociable again particularly, for example, after a period of isolation or bereavement and again, this is a benefit highly valued by participants.

... three years or so ago my wife died... and I sat in the house, but in that year it was a very hot summer...and I found myself getting out of the house...there's something unsatisfactory about walking on one's own...And my daughter said to me one day "Look, I've found this information on health walks". So I gave it a try and it actually has been a godsend because it has got me out of the house and got me involved, talking to people...

- 4.10 Another factor was the sense of community and commitment that belonging to an organised walking group seems to foster amongst participants.

...I get as much enjoyment out of staying with somebody on one of the Monday walks who can hardly walk round, can just creep round, as I do from going flat out myself, because you're putting something back into the sport, into it again. It's the same with every sport I've ever taken part in: you take things out, you've got so much enjoyment out of it, you want to put it back into it...

- 4.11 The majority of WfH participants are over 55, and this seems to be a factor in attracting new walkers of a similar age, as people feel they will be able to fit in and have interests and walking ability in common.

...I enjoy walking with like-minded wrinklies...

...But he is too lonely, you know what I mean, he is not interacting with people of our age, you know. So I said let's join a walking club...

- 4.12 However, interestingly, some walkers (particularly the new walkers) expressed concern that some walking groups were perhaps too close-knit and because of this there was the potential for cliques to form. Walkers thought this was perhaps due to a lack of 'new faces' joining the group, but also recognised that the cliques could actually put off newcomers. Others mentioned that they felt more could be done to welcome newcomers and that it was a key role of the walk leader to ensure that new people were properly welcomed and integrated to the group.

...I'm just wondering if, as time goes on...that you might find that there are people who become really friendly and it's natural, and then if somebody new comes, you know, are they going to feel a little bit - especially if they come on their own - are they going to feel a little bit, "Oh, these people all know one another..."

- 4.13 It seems that the strong sense of belonging and cultural similarity that WfH participants feel within their walking groups could actually deter new people from joining walking groups. Indeed, Walk 4 Health (2006), concluded that group dynamics were barriers to encouraging new walkers and more needed to be done to remove these barriers with more effort directed at attracting younger people and people from more diverse backgrounds. However, by changing the profile of WfH participants there could be a possibility of alienating the existing participants. The reason many of them come is because they want to mix with like-minded people of a similar age. Ultimately this could result in people dropping out of health walks and/or that walking groups might be separated

by age, ethnicity, and ability. This issue could have significant implications and challenges for how the WfH expansion and progression activities are developed and implemented. For example, when recruiting new members, organisers will need to understand how best to work with the group dynamic.

Improving health

4.14 Keeping fit and healthy, particularly into older age emerged as another key motivation for why people start walking. O'Brien and Morris (2009), also found that the chance to become more active to improve health was one of the primary motivators for participating in organised and led outdoor physical activity; and that users also identified mental and physical health improvements as one of the key benefits of participating in organised and led physical activity.

4.15 Walking groups provide an opportunity for participants to gradually build up physical activity in a relaxed and informal environment and help people get back to fitness for example, after surgery or when recovering from serious illness.

... then in 2002 I had cancer of the oesophagus. After that, I was a wreck. Then they started these walks round the Arrow Vale and they got me to go along. I was creeping round almost, to start with. Now I can keep up with most people. So it has done me the world of good...

4.16 Participants also perceive mental health benefits from taking part in organised walking activity, not only the 'feel good factor' that going on a walk brings, but participants believe it really can and has helped them to overcome depression. This finding is supported by research undertaken by Peacock, Hine and Pretty (2007) who found that exercising outdoors in a green environment is more effective in enhancing mood and improving self esteem compared to the equivalent amount of exercise indoors.

...I have always suffered from SAD... my low points are always January, February, that sort of time...a friend of mine, she also suffers like this...and she introduced me to Croydon health walks. The first walk I went on was at Selsdon Woods, and I can't tell you the difference it made because I had been walking. I mean, and interacting with other people as well, but it was a combination of both...

4.17 Organised walks are viewed by participants as an easy, convenient way to build exercise into your life, lose weight and generally improve your health. This is probably because the people who participate in WfH schemes are generally retired, so they have more time available to participate in walks. It may be that other sectors in society are not participating in health walks because they are not convenient for them, ie they may work and/or have childcare responsibilities and find that the walks are not at the right time for them, or they're simply just too tired. It could also be that they are put off by the badge of 'health walk', they perhaps don't consider themselves as unhealthy, and therefore don't see how they would benefit from a 'health walk'. It may simply be that participating in an organised walk does not appeal to all sectors in society. However it is clear that both the WfH expansion programme and the WfH progression scheme will need to consider their audiences in relation to demand for WfH and use this intelligence to broaden the opportunities for participation where appropriate.

4.18 Several walkers indicated that they had had walking prescribed to them by their GP for various reasons including: to help lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and ease back pain.

...I started walking to basically try and get a bit fitter, to lose a bit of weight and to have some fresh air. Because I'm basically a lazy person in exercise - exercise has never really appealed to me, but I thought having a walk, you know, that'll be fine, and I do enjoy it...

4.19 We found that the 'health' motivator is not necessarily always in relation to the individual's own health, but can often be the health of a loved one or friend. Going on the walk is to offer support and provide encouragement to them, rather than for the benefit of their own health.

...my present girlfriend suffered with depression and I had noticed some differences in her but I do know near enough that to get out and walk is an excellent way of helping with that depression. So that was one reason I went on the walk...

Enjoying the natural environment

4.20 Enjoying and appreciating the natural environment was also cited by the majority of walkers as a motivator for walking. We found that many of the walks described took place in semi-natural or natural places, such as: local parks, recreation grounds, nature reserves or country parks. O'Brien and Morris (2009) found that 'contact with nature' was identified as a 'key benefit' of participating in organised and led outdoor physical activity rather than a 'motivator'. Peacock, Hine and Pretty (2007), found that participants enjoyed the scenery and exercise more in a green outdoor walk and they also enjoyed being in the company of other people and doing something different more in the green environment.

4.21 The evidence clearly shows that enjoyment of the natural environment is an important motivator for participating in organised walks and a key benefit derived from participating in organised walks. However, this appears to be the limit of walkers 'engagement' with the natural environment. Their level of 'engagement' seems to be passive and centred around the opportunity for them to simply 'observe and enjoy the view'.

4.22 WfH progression aims to offer a structured pathway for sustainable behaviour change, leading to continuing contact between participants and the natural environment. However, simple exposure to the natural environment through WfH is unlikely to influence environmental behaviour. Hinds and Spark (2007) found that people need a strong emotional connection with nature to exhibit pro-environmental behaviours. People's desire and ability to change their environmental behaviour can be influenced by all kinds of internal and external factors, and more often than not, these factors can result in barriers to change rather than facilitating it. The relationship between attitudes and actions is complex and further research is required to fully understand it. In terms of this intervention, there is a lack of evidence on whether participation in WfH could lead to long term environmental behaviours that Natural England considers desirable and there is a need for longitudinal studies to explore this. Nevertheless, the evidence we have to date, around people's enjoyment of the natural environment through WfH is encouraging, and indicates that, WfH could have the potential to develop people's connection with nature and promote sustainable behaviours.

4.23 Variation and location of the walking route is important to walkers. Simple things, that we tend to take for granted like 'getting fresh air' were regularly brought up during the sessions as motivations for walking. Other motivations were around being able to enjoy attractive landscape and wildlife. In fact, a lot of walkers were frustrated that there was not enough time to be able to stop and appreciate scenery, but accepted, because the walks were 'health walks', they were generally fast paced.

...sometimes the pressure is on for you to keep going, you can't actually stand, like on a frosty morning, just stand and say wow, look at that, isn't that beautiful...

4.24 Some people who mentioned the issue of walking too fast indicated they would re-visit a place they had discovered through a health walk, to be able to take more time to enjoy the experience.

...The thing is if you go on the walk in the first place you know where to go, you can go back later and do it at your own pace...

4.25 There were others who were frustrated that their walks lacked attractive scenery and they were keen to go further afield and get out into the countryside.

...There is more walks which I do intend to start looking at to see whether I could make them, because they are further afield, and it would be nicer scenery than what we have to look at, at the moment...

- 4.26 The majority of walkers quoted wildlife as a motivation for walking. They enjoyed being able to see and discuss the wildlife on the walk, with birds and plants being particular favourites. Other walkers were of the opinion that most people weren't especially interested in seeing wildlife on the walk, and it was suggested that perhaps there are two types of walkers; the people who just do it to be sociable and to have a bit of exercise and serious walkers who hike and look round at the scenery, and that you needed to decide which you were.

...I like to see all the things around the walk, like gardens or go by the canal and see the birds and all sorts of things... Natural things, not artificial things...

- 4.27 Although appreciation of the natural environment was clearly an important motivator, social motivations were perhaps more important as it was noted that, for instance, watching wildlife may be better undertaken as a solitary activity (particularly for men) rather than as part of a group.

...I go out walking by myself quite often because it allows me to do what I want to do. In other words, I can stop, I can look at birds...

...On a health walk...we did try sort of stopping and "Look, there's a buzzard" and they would just ignore us and carry on walking, you know, not interested really. What they're interested in is talking to their friends, and I sort of say you could take them anywhere and they wouldn't notice really...I think they're focused on the social aspects...

- 4.28 There were mixed views about terrain, with a lot of people preferring flat/even ground from a safety point of view (tended to be the women) and others who enjoy the variation in terrain because of the interest and challenge it offers.

...I've done the Thursday one quite regularly and we walk through Heathfield, because you meet at Gravel Hill or you go the other side, and it's quite varied, you do get slopes and gentler hills, and it's a real mixture, so from that point of view it's good...

Influential factors

- 4.29 We identified two external factors with apparent influence over whether people participated in organised walking activity. The first of these we refer to as 'background' (or individual identity): where people come from, their culture, their upbringing and childhood and their personal interests. The second factor we refer to as 'lifestyle': flexibility - the convenience of walks, the time people have available; and also the aspects of structure and routine and why this can be so important for people, particularly those who are retired.

Background

- 4.30 The majority of the focus group participants we spoke to had either always walked, and/or had an interest in the outdoors. It appeared that this was either because it was a passion shared by the family as they were growing up or because it was a necessity, a way of life that has stayed with them. In most cases the walking stopped because of a change in circumstances and WfH has provided an opportunity for them to rediscover it, later in life. This indicates that a person is more likely to join an organised walking group if they already have an interest in walking.

...well I come from the countryside in Ireland, Donegal, and that has always been in my system and I longed for that freedom that we had as children. So that's where my love of walking starts...

...Before I came to England, I used to walk in Germany but that usually was the whole weekend, you know, you set off and walk and you used to walk all day and then sleep overnight in a youth hostel and then, you know, make your way back the day after. But then I've been married twice and both my husbands' didn't like walking. So there was a big lull. I mean it was the children but it was other things as well, you know...

- 4.31 This contrasted with one of the younger participants who described how WfH had inspired her to go walking independently in the wider countryside, although she didn't originally expect to enjoy it.

...I spend my time in town shopping, well you know I didn't think it would be for me...I remember how lovely it was and the fresh air and how much better I felt after doing it. It's funny, when you live in the town....when you do go out and see the countryside, you do appreciate it...

Lifestyle

- 4.32 People appreciate the flexibility and convenience of organised walking groups, especially the fact that walking can be so easily accommodated into their everyday lives. A lot of people cited the fact that it's an activity you can just 'turn up' to without booking, and at no cost.

- 4.33 Others said they really liked the fact that they didn't have to think about anything, someone else was in charge for a change and making all the decisions. 'Routine' and 'structure' were mentioned repeatedly and seemed to be an important factor, particularly to those who had recently retired or lost their job. Belonging to a walking group gives a reason to 'set the alarm' and get up in the morning and 'punctuates' the week. We heard that at one scheme in the West Midlands, more men are now joining the walks because they've been made redundant and so are looking for something to do.

...I think having a sort of a routine, you know, we know what day of the week it is because it's, you know, it's a Monday walk around Lloyd Park, that's something to look forward to...

- 4.34 There were mixed feelings about 'time', with some people feeling that there was a good range of different start times which meant you could choose a walk that was convenient and fitted in with busy lifestyles. Others felt constrained by time when they were on a walk and these views came particularly from the younger participants in the focus groups.

...Time pressure...like when we go we know we've got to hurry up and get back, got to go back, get changed and everything and go off to work... It's a good thing and it's a bad thing. It's good that you can still do it for the hour and a half, but then if you want to go on longer you can't, you've got to stop and think and you've got to get back...

Walker preferences

- 4.35 Walking preferences seemed to be consistent across the four focus groups and three common themes were identified: walk type (which is very much about where the walk takes place); sense of achievement (which was more about what people personally got out of it); and safety (which covered a set of issues such as weather, access and facilities).

Walk type

- 4.36 It was clear that people like to walk in the 'countryside' to appreciate nice views and scenery and get away from built up areas. There was a strong feeling that some walk routes were too repetitive and what people want is a variety of routes to choose from because they can become boring. Not many people in the group had experienced 'guided' walks, ie a local specialist coming

along to talk about the wildlife on the route of walk, but where this had happened people seemed to have found it interesting and enjoyable

...we have about six, say six different routes. I mean even those you think, "Oh, I wish I could go somewhere else"...

- 4.37 It was evident from all the focus groups that people really enjoyed the aspect of discovering new places in their local area that they had not heard of, or visited before. People also said they would value having more information about these different places particularly in relation to local history and the natural environment and felt this was the role of the walk leader to pass on such relevant information/leaflets. This indicates that perhaps another outcome of participation in WfH is that individuals become/feel more attached to their 'local place'.

...Well, what I found that I liked was getting to know the local area where I live but I don't know half the places to go. I found three different parks I didn't know were there...

- 4.38 There were mixed views about what people wanted from a walk, particularly in relation to pace, distance, duration and terrain. For some, pace and distance were really important factors, they wanted a brisk walk and a long distance. Whereas others were happier with gentler, shorter walks. However there was agreement that there needed to be a range of different types of walks to cater for varying capabilities, at different locations and different times of the day and week to ensure that more people had the opportunity to participate.

Sense of achievement

- 4.39 Many participants reported that one of the things they most liked about walking was the feeling of 'achievement' they had on completing a walk. Going on a walk even when you don't feel like it, seemed to be especially important to those people who normally lacked motivation or who had to make more of an effort than most because of health conditions. Other people said they enjoyed the challenge of completing a new walk, or a difficult walk over rugged terrain or at a fast pace.
- 4.40 People also like the feeling of being really tired at the end of a walk, but said it was a 'good tired' feeling that they associated with the satisfaction of finishing the walk. Seeing the count on the pedometer and how many steps had been achieved at the end of the walk was also cited as something walkers like to see and felt proud of. These findings are supported by the work of O'Brien and Morris (2009) who found 'a sense of achievement and self-improvement' was cited by users as a key benefit of participating in organised and led outdoor physical activity.

...It's good for me. When I've finished, it's a job well done and I can feel proud of myself that I've actually forced myself to do something, you see, and I'm getting that little bit fitter...

Safety

- 4.41 Safety was raised many times during the course of the four focus groups particularly in relation to weather, terrain and accessibility.
- 4.42 Bad weather was a real issue for walkers. People were mainly concerned that bad weather conditions, for example rain and mud or snow and ice, were dangerous, and were particularly worried about the risk of falling over and injuring themselves. They also said that bad weather slowed people down, because they were more conscious of looking where they were walking and that this also made the walk less enjoyable. If it was bad weather before the walk, people were less likely to go, although if it started raining during the walk people tended to continue. Other people mentioned that they liked to do specific types of walk in specific types of weather, for example walking through fields in the sunshine, or if it was windy or raining they liked to be in the woods.

...We don't enjoy it if it's raining - well, we don't go, but if it's raining on your walk, fine...

- 4.43 Accessibility also came up a number of times for various different reasons such as stiles steps, uneven ground and transport. Some people mentioned that stiles could be difficult and dangerous to climb over, particularly those that were poorly maintained or slippery in the rain. Steps were brought up in relation to accessing canals, this was a currently a problem for parents with pushchairs and would also be a problem for people in wheelchairs. Uneven ground was unpopular, because of the need to constantly look at their feet to see where they were walking because they were worried about tripping and falling. Transport was raised as an issue because it can often be difficult to get to the more interesting walks that are further afield without a car.
- 4.44 Other issues that cropped up were around the role of the walk leaders. Views about this were again mixed, with some people feeling that the walk leaders did an excellent job in looking out for everyone's welfare and others feeling that health and safety was taken to the extreme.

...But again, with the health and safety, which I mean is absolutely ridiculous, where we're told we can't do that walk because we haven't tested it, because, because, because - that's sad...

Walker aspirations

- 4.45 Participants were asked how they would like their walks to change/progress in the future. Not surprisingly, experienced walkers seemed generally happy with the range of walks already offered, whereas, new walkers expressed an interest in trying new types of walks. The reason for this difference between the two groups is probably because experienced walkers remain engaged with the walks because they like them and this explains why they expressed less desire to change their range of walks. Less experienced, new walkers are perhaps more likely to give us more of an insight into what is required to develop the WfH progression programme. Indeed, we heard a consistent message around the need for a greater variety of walks (new routes and new places) and also longer walks. This seemed to be very much connected with people's desire to enjoy different scenery and natural features (see Appendix 6 'themed wishes for the future').

...it would be nice to try somewhere different, you know, and see somewhere different. Because where we live we're right by the main road and it would be nice to see a few more trees and greenery...

...the walk we used to do..it's lovely...the lake there with all the different birdlife on there...and we did that each week, and so therefore it becomes boring...

5 Discussion and conclusions

- 5.1 The aim of this research study was to find out “what motivates individuals to participate in organised walking activity?”
- 5.2 Three key factors which motivate people to participate in organised walking activity emerged from this study: social contact, improving health and enjoyment of the natural environment. The study also identified ‘background’ and ‘lifestyle’ as additional factors that influenced participation in organised walking activity.
- 5.3 This study produced results which support the findings of other work in this field, however, there are some slight differences between the findings of some of the research quoted and our study. These differences are around what participants perceive as their motivations for participating in walking and what they feel are the benefits of walking. This may be down to the differences in how research was designed and implemented and/or down to the fact that participants found it difficult to differentiate between motivations and benefits because these factors are often closely related or the same.
- 5.4 The results demonstrate that ‘social contact’ is the most significant motivator for individuals to participate in organised walking activity and this is also confirmed by the findings of other similar research. Walk 4 Health (2006) found that ‘social reasons’ were the most influential motivators for participating in an organised health walk; and O’Brien and Morris (2009) found that socialising and meeting new people was a primary motivator for participating in organised and led outdoor physical activity. Social contact is undoubtedly an initial ‘hook’, particularly for many retired people, as WfH is viewed as an excellent way to have regular contact with like-minded people of a similar age as well as reaping the additional benefits that socialising brings. The importance of social contact to WfH participants is perhaps not particularly surprising and in order to encourage participation in WfH progression, it should remain a central element of progression activities. However, the challenge, for both WfH progression and expansion, will be the findings that suggest the dynamic of WfH groups could actually deter people from more diverse backgrounds joining WfH groups, and how to ensure integration of newcomers to WfH.
- 5.5 ‘Improving health’ and the opportunity to ‘enjoy the natural environment’ are also viewed by walkers as important factors. Participants take advantage of WfH because it’s an easy way to build regular exercise into their lives and also an opportunity to get fresh air and enjoy the scenery. This is supported by O’Brien and Morris (2009) who found that ‘the chance to become more active to improve health’ was a primary motivator and that users identified ‘mental and physical health improvements and ‘contact with nature’ as key benefits of participating in organised and led outdoor physical activity. However the majority of WfH participants are retired and likely to have more spare time which explains why WfH is easily accommodated into their lifestyles. This may not be the case for other sectors in society and therefore WfH progression and expansion will need to consider how to make activities more accessible to a wider audience.
- 5.6 The findings around ‘enjoyment of the natural environment’ as a motivator for participation in WfH are of particular relevance to WfH progression. Natural England’s unique role in supporting WfH and encouraging people to access the natural environment, is based on the theory that if people enjoy and understand the natural environment, then they are more likely to take action to conserve it. The findings suggest that WfH participants enjoy being out in the natural environment and discovering new places in their local area but that their engagement with the natural environment is generally quite passive. Research has shown that people need to feel a strong connection with nature to exhibit pro-environmental behaviours (Hinds and Spark 2007). WfH progression aims to ‘offer a structured pathway for sustainable behaviour change, leading to continuing contact between participants and the natural environment’. Therefore, another challenge for WfH progression will be building on the ‘enjoyment of the natural environment’

motivator to enable walkers to make deeper connections with nature and to promote sustainable environmental behaviours.

- 5.7 The combination of social contact, improving health and enjoying the natural environment seems to be important in both encouraging participation in and fidelity to WfH. These findings are supported by the results of other research in this area, for example; the work of Ashley and Bartlett (2001), who found that in addition to physical fitness, the countryside and social aspects of the walks were important motivating factors for people to take part; Barton, Griffin and Pretty (2008) who found that the combination of social contact, green space and exercise was more beneficial in improving self esteem rather than any of these elements in isolation; and Peacock, Hine and Pretty (2007) found that participants enjoyed the scenery, exercise and the company of other people more in a green environment.
- 5.8 'Background' and 'lifestyle' were identified as additional factors that have an influence on whether people are more likely to participate in organised walking activity. People that grew up in the countryside and/or have a general interest in walking are more likely to join a walking group. People who are retired, out of work or in part-time employment have more spare time to spend with a walking group.
- 5.9 The results of our study and the findings of similar research show that overall 'social contact' is the key motivator for participation in organised walking activity. However, the combination of social contact; improving health; and enjoying the natural environment; coupled with the external influences of lifestyle and background, effects both initial and sustained participation in organised walking activity.

6 Implications for WfH progression and WfH expansion

WfH progression

6.1 The following points will be of particular relevance to the development of the proposed WfH progression scheme:

- People want to choose from a range of walks at different places in their local area, walk routes and locations are currently too limited.
- People enjoy the aspect of discovering and learning about new places in their local area they've never been to/heard of before.
- People are also keen to go further afield, particularly if that means getting out into the open countryside to see more attractive landscape.
- Fitter participants want occasional longer walks.
- There is a need to cater for different capabilities, this is happening on some walks but not all, ie pace - slow, medium and fast.
- It is desirable to have a choice in type of terrain, for example, flat, undulating, hilly.
- There is a need to consider and cater for different interests, for example, some people are particularly interested in seeing wildlife whilst others are interested in local history.
- People particularly enjoy the aspect of socialising outside walk activities so walkers should be presented with opportunities to take part in more active environmental group pursuits (for example, volunteering).
- People value the fact that WfH is an 'organised', 'led' activity with someone else in charge that they can just turn up to.
- People want more interpretation and information about the walks, ie local history and natural environment.
- Transport can be a barrier for people who want to go on the walks further afield.

6.2 In practice, taking forward some of these points could involve:

- Exchanging information and sharing best practice with the Ramblers, how do their walks operate, how do they recruit walkers and could we adopt some of their approaches.
- Working with partners, ie RSPB, Wildlife Trusts to provide more opportunities for walkers to have close contact with nature.
- Developing walkers environmental knowledge and awareness and helping walkers better understand the effects of their everyday behaviours on the natural environment; by making better use of NNRs and LNRs for guided walks, environmental education and potential volunteering opportunities.
- Developing walks that are both self-guided and guided that explore the geology of different places. This works well in towns and cities where people can explore the fabric of the built environment and the stories that it has to tell. A particularly relevant example for WfH, is a geology trail in Dudley which takes heart patients from the local hospital to a nearby volcano and back.
- Involvement in community projects to improve/create local greenspaces.

WfH expansion programme

6.3 The following points will be of particular relevance for WfH expansion:

- There seems to be a need to ensure that walks are happening at a variety of times during the day and week including weekends to fit in with people's lifestyles and help ensure there are opportunities for more people to participate.
- The need to consider the implications of changing the profile of WfH participants in terms of existing walkers, group dynamics, resources and community cohesion targets.
- More needs to be done to welcome new walkers and ensure their integration to the group.
- The significant social and 'community cohesion' benefits of walking could be used as a lever to encourage local authorities to promote and support WfH schemes to help deliver their targets around these needs.
- Consider the audiences and marketing for WfH, and whether the badge of 'health walk' could be a deterrent for some people.

6.4 In practice, taking forward some of these points could involve:

- Understanding whether there is an optimum or maximum effective group size. This might mean setting up a series of smaller walks groups. Or that larger walks might be more effectively led as a series of groups each with its own 'minder'.
- Organising pulses of recruitment publicity, so that a group of newcomers join at the same time, giving them a cohort of other new walkers to socialise with.
- Encouraging existing participants to devote attention to welcoming newcomers as a specific group activity to get old and new walkers mixing through specific social events for example a special lunch or a coffee morning.

7 Recommendations for further research

7.1 Further research might focus on:

- Those groups of people who are under-represented as participants in organised walking activity in order to explore the reasons why they do not participate and appreciate what the barriers are. This could potentially be very helpful to the WfH expansion programme in terms of understanding where and how efforts need to be targeted.
- Identifying and talking to individuals that 'dropped out' of organised walking activity, in order to understand why and what could be done to prevent this.
- Longitudinal studies to explore whether participation in walking/green exercise interventions can lead to pro-environmental behaviours.

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Appendix 1 Details of focus group participants

Table A Details of focus group participants

Date of group	Location	Experienced/beginner	Gender	Age	Ethnicity
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	35 - 44	White British
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	35 - 44	White British
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	?	?
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	45 - 54	White British
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Male	65 - 74	White British
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	35 - 44	White British
12 March 2009	Birmingham	Beginner	Female	35 - 44	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Male	retired	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Female	retired	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Male	65 - 74	Asian Indian
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Male	65 - 74	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Male	75 - 84	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Female	65 - 74	White British
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Female	?	?
18 March 2009	Birmingham	Experienced	Male	?	?
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Male	over 60	White British
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Female	over 60	White British
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Female	over 60	Black Caribbean
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Male	over 60	Asian
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Male	over 60	White British
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Female	over 60	German
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Female	?	?
19 March 2009	Croydon	Experienced	Male	over 60	White British
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Female	?	White British
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Male	?	?
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Male	?	?
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Female	?	Black Caribbean
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Female	?	White British
26 March 2009	Croydon	Beginner	Female	?	White British

Appendix 2 Focus group topic guide

Table B Focus group topic guide

10:30 20 min	Registration and Coffee Name badges
10:50 CA 5 - 10 min	Welcome Thank you Who we are/ purpose of focus group What we will be doing/tape record/notes Consent forms - how information will be used
11:00 HH	Ice breaker game Introduce your partner - name and an interesting/funny fact
11:15 - 11:45 HH 5 min 10 min 5 min 10 min	Motivations 1. What made you start walking (be specific but keep on one post-it) work in pairs, write on post-its, stick up on wall Come back together and group post-its into common themes 2. What keeps you walking Work in pairs, write on post-its Come back together and group post-its into common themes
3 min comfort break	
11:45 - 12:15 CA 10 min 20 min	Like/not like so much 3. Each person has a minute to describe where they currently walk and what happens on the walk. 4. Likes/not like so much Work in pairs and write likes/not like so much on flipchart Explain why to rest of group (6 min each)
12:15 - 12:35 HH 10 min 10 min	Walking wish wall (phrase in context of the previous sessions) 5. What new/other types of walk would you like to do? Work in pairs and write wishes on post-its Use coloured dots to rate which are most important
10 min Comfort Break & Refreshments	
12:45 - 13:20 5 min per person CA	Story telling 6. Ask each member of the group to think back to before they joined the walking group and share the highs and lows of their walking story. May probe areas of interest (around likes/dislikes) but limited time.
13:30 - 14:30 60 mins HH	Thanks, lunch and close 7. Repeat what will happen to the information we have collected, mention that they can have a copy of the report if they wish and hand out gift vouchers as thank you.



Appendix 3 Consent form

Walking the Way to Health: Natural England 'Walking motivations' study.

Natural England is undertaking a small scale research project in order to find out more about people's experiences of organised walking activity.

We would like you to participate in this focus group session today in order to improve our understanding of what motivates people to walk, what types of walk people find most enjoyable and what kinds of walks people would like to do more of.

The information we gather from you will be analysed and compiled in a report which we may share with third parties, in particular the Department of Health, to contribute towards our thinking around the expansion of the Walking the Way to Health Scheme. We will respect confidentiality at all times and ensure that the information we use is anonymised so that individuals will not be identified.

Consent

I have read and understood the information above Yes No

I agree to take part in a group discussion which will be audio recorded and the contents published in a research report which may be shared with relevant third parties Yes No

I agree that my photo can be taken and used in the report and/or publicity material Yes No

I agree that Natural England or its representatives may contact me in the future in order to carry out further research about walking Yes No

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation. Yes No

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Tel:.....

Signature:.....Date:.....



Appendix 4 Thematic framework

Table C Thematic Framework

1. Social	2. Health	3. Environment	4. Walk Type
1.1 Information exchange	2.1 Physical	3.1 Scenery	4.1 Boring route
1.2 Friends/meeting people (new & same)	2.2 Mental wellbeing	3.2 Wildlife	4.2 Discovering new places
1.3 Bereavement	2.3 Exercise and fitness	3.3 Fresh air	4.3 Distance
1.4 Meeting people outside walk activities	2.4 Walking to support someone else	3.4 Natural places	4.4 Pace
1.5 Commitment		3.5 Terrain	
1.6 Community			
5. Safety	6. Lifestyle	7. Background	8. Achievement
5.1 Weather	6.1 Time	7.1 Childhood	8.1 Challenge
5.2 Terrain	6.2 Flexibility	7.2 Culture	8.2 Feel good factor
5.3 Facilities	6.3 Convenience	7.3 Interests	
5.4 Walk leaders	6.4 Financial		
5.5 Personal safety	6.5 Routine		
5.6 Accessibility			

Appendix 5 Verbatim segments by theme

Table D Verbatim segments by theme - Social

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Social	<p>... we like the socialising...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...We've got a good mix of people, different ages...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...we like the socialising...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>A nice mixture of people, people that maybe you wouldn't normally socialise with that, you know, you find yourself socialising with. That's really nice...p.17 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I think there is a danger that when people get quite friendly with one another, they come for a chat and forget that they're there walking for health...p.19 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I'm just wondering if, as time goes on...that you might find that there are people who become really friendly and it's natural, and then if somebody new comes, you know, are they going to feel a little bit - especially if they come on their own - are they going to feel a little bit, "Oh, these people all know one another...p.19 12/3/09.</p>	<p>....we all went to Godstone together and then we joined up with the group and we went for a walk through Godstone all around the back, it was wonderful. Then we came back to the village and we had a meal in the pub... p.11 26/3/09.</p> <p>...sometimes we go on walks in the evening but mostly in the summer. I like that most. But then we end up in a pub having lost a couple of ounces we just shed from walking for me...</p> <p>Yeah, we have dinner and lots of entertainment...p.12 26/3/09.</p> <p>...It is very social...p.12 26/3/09.</p> <p>...It's very social, I like that...p.12 26/3/09.</p> <p>part of my wanting to walk is in contact with other people...p.14 26/3/09.</p> <p>... You might start off, you know, walking at the top really and then you can work your way back so you are walking with different people, and that...p.14 26/3/09.</p>	<p>... And then social: I mean it's good to talk to people as we're walking, that's one of the things I like about it, and in Ross there are people who have lived there a long time and know interesting little bits in the town...p.12 18/3/09.</p> <p>...Talking to people on the walk. Every day when we go we try to talk to different people. You always learn something from them...p.13 18/3/09.</p> <p>...And then the gaining information from each other: the walk that I said that we like round the old quarter of Stourbridge, we're always looking into people's gardens and there's always someone who will see an interesting plant and say "Oh, that's so and so", and you've not heard of it before, and so we do a little bit of horticulture on the way. Not horticulture, but we're getting information on trees and shrubs and all sorts of things...p.13 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I do go on a walker's club with a group of men, that's usually about 10 to 12 miles... and we finish up at a pub for a meal, which we quite look forward to...p.11 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I like the group because we're from different backgrounds and different social activities we're involved in, and we can share our thoughts and sometimes somebody will come up with something that we've never heard about before and we can discuss it, and we walk at the same pace...p.12 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I like the discussions of various trees, plants and gardens, because we talk about all them things and "What's that tree, do you know the name of it?" and somebody does, and then we go on to plants and then we come to the garden, and all the information that we share...p.12 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>...I've enjoyed meeting everybody...p.28 12/3/09.</p> <p>...it's great seeing familiar faces every week and you get to know people and it's nice, but I've just got this idea that, you know, it's always good to keep fresh blood coming through, you know...p.33 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I've enjoyed meeting everybody...p.28 12/3/09.</p> <p>...it's great seeing familiar faces every week and you get to know people and it's nice, but I've just got this idea that, you know, it's always good to keep fresh blood coming through, you know...p.33 12/3/09.</p> <p>...On a health walk...we did try sort of stopping and "Look, there's a buzzard" and they would just ignore us and carry on walking, you know, not interested really. What they're interested in is talking to their friends, and I sort of say you could take them anywhere and they wouldn't notice really...I think they're focused on the social aspects...p.37 12/3/09.</p>	<p>... I think meeting people is mandatory...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>... more can be done to welcome newcomers. Sometimes if you are new some of the leaders say oh let's welcome, you know, this is Joan, but most of the time you sort of gather and then go off for a walk, so there isn't a lot of always...there is not much interaction...p.19 26/3/09.</p> <p>... it's the company, just meeting up and having a chat, that's nice...p.20 26/3/09.</p> <p>...you can meet the same people as well...p.21 26/3/09.</p> <p>...we meet each other and we all chat...p.21 26/3/09.</p> <p>...and I do like to have a chat to other people, both during the walk and at the end...p.23 26/3/09.</p> <p>... I have met some very, very interesting people...I have got a lot from it, and met some really super people and just an amazing introduction into some of the things that are going on in the world that I have no knowledge of...p.28 26/3/09.</p>	<p>... We love the socialising bit of it and the exchange of information...p.14 18/3/09.</p> <p>... it would be nice occasionally to meet other walkers, meet at a convenient place and get together, because this is what walking is all about, it's part of the pleasure of life, at our age anyway. It's to meet and socialise, exchange views. That's what I enjoy about walking...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>... So we meet and we have this walk, varying walks, and it got me out of isolation, it got me socialising again, because you do lose the capability of socialising, shall I say. And it also got me doing something that I totally love...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I meet lovely people who are in like situations, we swap notes, we problem solve amongst each other...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>... Bob's already said that we've got five walks now. I'm liking them all except the one, and I've already mentioned that because it has got muddy, undulating ground, really very uneven, and again you can't socialise so well because you're walking more single file. That was my reasons for not liking the one particular walk...p.20 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...From the point of view of just general conversation, as a fairly recent widower myself there is a number of things which I have managed to run past it may sound a little pathetic, but like on cooking things, I should not have eaten eight cloves of garlic, and I didn't realise that...p.14 19/3/09.</p> <p>...There's one man who's an extremely political animal and I've had some real head to heads actually with him, so there's quite a variation actually in conversation, which is also quite interesting... again the social aspect...p.14 19/3/09.</p> <p>...apart from the benefit of actually...talking to people, we also, well I find, find out where and what is on special offer, and often if you don't know something you ask people and they come back to me or, you know. It's really quite good. Holidays or whatever...p.15 19/3/09.</p> <p>...sometimes you can also have quite a laugh...p.15 19/3/09.</p> <p>...the people are ever so nice, you know...p.18 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>...people aren't really taking in what's in their surroundings because they're engrossed in a conversation about something. It's not necessarily a bad thing, it's just that's the case, you know, and you go, "Did you see that?" and they go, "Oh, no, I didn't, I was chatting away" and that's just how it is...p.38 12/3/09.</p> <p>..there's four mums with pushchairs, yeah, that's good, so the little ones get the fresh air as well...p.14 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...we have got to know people and we have heard about other things through not so much the walk leaders but through the people we have met on the walk, the kind of social contact it avoids you sitting around too much... p.28 26/3/09.</p> <p>... So I wanted to get out. And these were local walks, meeting people, seemed an excellent opportunity...p.29 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I rather enjoy it and I wish I could do it every day, but I am not a loner. There is some people who can walk by themselves, I have tried it, I hate it. I don't like walking and I haven't got a dog that I'm going to walk around with. So unless I am in a group, I am very much a person, I like people around me and involved in anything with lots of activities with people. So that is why I go...p.30 26/3/09.</p>	<p>... But walking, I mean I've made friends, people that, you know, if they don't turn up, give them a ring, "Are you all right today?", "Yes, I'll be there next week", and that aspect of it...p.20 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I've learned things about an area within 4 miles of where I live, I've lived all my life, that I didn't know: little things, little geography things, little history things. I've learned more about plants...p.20 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I do like walking. I wrote on here I really enjoy going out and making friends and I've been happy... p.21 18/3/09.</p> <p>.... More because it's healthy, and making friends. If I don't go, I think I'll miss something. First when we meet we talk to each other and ask how you are...p.21 18/3/09.</p> <p>...And now I've started walking, I just love it. I just love it. See different things, meet different people, everyday almost...p.21 18/3/09.</p> <p>... walk on a Thursday. Only for an hour, but it's good fun. And we finish up in Wetherspoons for coffee...p.25 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I enjoy meeting people and discussing various things. So I like walking...p.26 18/3/09.</p>	<p>... I meet different people from different backgrounds, and they discuss various things, like plants, gardening, cooking, what the different shops are charging around London...p.19 19/3/09.</p> <p>...So I embarked on them, reluctant because I was sort of scared to go, I didn't know, I saw all these people turned out at the tram stop at Lloyd Park and you do feel a bit on your own. And of course then suddenly you start chatting to somebody...and you build up that sort of a connection, and then you look forward to sort of meeting them again or seeing them...p.19 19/3/09.</p> <p>...My boy comes along on the walks as well, he lives in Worcester Park, it gives me the opportunity of seeing him...p.20 19/3/09.</p> <p>I've been married twice and both my husband didn't like walking. So there was a big lull...So when Claude died about 9 years ago...I heard about it and I joined and it has been fantastic, I've thoroughly enjoyed walking...p.18 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group 12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>... I have only been walking since January with my husband... he goes out walking on his own, and lasts every day for about three quarters of an hour, which is fine. But he is too lonely, you know what I mean, he is not interacting with people of our age, you know. So I said let's join a walking club, oh I don't want to do that, you know, mingle with people... it's the best thing he could have done and we don't walk together, he is always chatting to the ladies...p.31 26/3/09.</p> <p>...in the end just before Christmas he actually died, but on the piece of paper that he left for me he said, "God bless you, go and enjoy yourself." So when Pat and my... sister...said, "Are you coming on the walks," and I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it, and then when they, when Pat said, "We will meet you outside," so I went in again, I'm sorry, and everybody hugged me and that was lovely and I have been walking every since. I find it very difficult... That's why I walk, because he wanted me to go and they helped me, and the people there all knew Barry and accepted me back in...p.30 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...I think the thing that I like most about belonging to a group is, I don't know whether it's our generation and I don't mean this offensively at all, I'm not sure if perhaps younger people give the commitment that we as an older group give, but for me I like the commitment of having said "Yes, I will join this group", and the fact that I mightn't really feel up to it one day but if I don't go so and so will ring me and they'll say "..., and I'll think "It's a shame for them to ring me". And that to me is most important...p.20 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I get as much enjoyment out of staying with somebody on one of the Monday walks who can hardly walk round, can just creep round, as I do from going flat out myself, because you're putting something back into the sport, into it again. It's the same with every sport I've ever taken part in: you take things out, you've got so much enjoyment out of it, you want to put it back into it...p.22-23 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I never realised that these walks were ongoing until my son passed away and I was desperately trying to come to terms with it, get over it, and I came in here to Croydon, Taberner House, to find a walk to celebrate my son's birthday, because he liked walking...p.19 19/3/09.</p> <p>... three years or so ago my wife died... and I sat in the house, but in that year it was a very hot summer...and I found myself getting out of the house...there's something unsatisfactory about walking on one's own...And my daughter said to me one day "Look, I've found this information on health walks". So I gave it a try and it actually has been a godsend because it has got me out of the house and got me involved, talking to people...p.22 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				

...I am not a confident person. I do not join things of my own volition. I will do things happily if somebody else organises it, but...I find it very difficult to actually go and find out about things. But because of that I then went along to South Norwood swimming pool because that is just down the road from me and that gave me the confidence, having been on another walk with my friend, nice people, I can do this, and I just turned up on the morning and one of the other walkers big smile, "Hello," and that's very, very important, certainly to me, for most of us anyway...p.27-28 26/3/09.

Table E Verbatim segments by theme - Health

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Health	<p>...I just started the walking for health reasons if anything, for exercise...p.29 12/3/09.</p> <p>...My blood pressure was diagnosed as high 18 months ago which was quite a shock to me, and it's mobility. So I just want to sort of keep, you know, young as long as I can really...p.34 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I think really mental well-being is probably the most important that comes out of it but there is the physical, of course, because they will walk, whether they like it or not, they walk two and a half miles by the time they've finished. They've still walked the two and a half miles. But if you actually do the course, as it were, you're told, you know, slow to start, warm them up, then get them going really fast, then calm it, it's just out the question, it's just out the question. Occasionally you get some people who really do take it seriously and they rush right to the front and they're off, they're going that way...p.38 12/3/09.</p> <p>... Fitness, obviously we like the fitness side of it, health...p.9 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I just want to be able to sort of keep fit really...p.34 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...I have always suffered from SAD... my low points are always January, February, that sort of time...a friend of mine, she also suffers like this...and she introduced me to Croydon health walks. The first walk I went on was at Selsdon Woods, and I can't tell you the difference it made because I had been walking. I mean, and interacting with other people as well, but it was a combination of both...p.27 26/3/09.</p> <p>...my present girlfriend suffered with depression and I had noticed some differences in her but I do know near enough that to get out and walk is an excellent way of helping with that depression. So that was one reason I went on the walk... Secondly, I am unemployed, suddenly unemployed, and when you stay in or try to get a job, you get a bit down yourself...I do believe one should keep regularly walking for health reasons...p.29 26/3/09.</p> <p>... I have had some traumatic experiences in life, very sometimes, my second marriage broke up, and after that I went into myself... I just sat feeling sorry for myself all the time, I couldn't get up...p.29 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...These are health walks, so people are encouraged to walk at a rate as though they're late for an appointment, so you are walking, increasing all the time...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...Then when I got diagnosed with prostate cancer, things take on an unknown meaning really. I can't walk as far as I used to walk. And so therefore, to join this group as we did with Age Concern was ideal for us...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>... Walking to me was part of everyday life when I was a child. I grew up in Ireland until I was 12 and we walked everywhere, we literally did. Moving here, I carried on for a while, but once we moved here I became my mother's carer -- not just my mother, there's nine of us, so I became carer for the nine of us. So I was basically restricted to home: go to school; stay home. That carried on basically through my adult life and then I had my daughter and my daughter unfortunately has special needs as well. So I became her carer as well. So I became isolated...p.19 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...what brought me to walking...was I had problems with my cholesterol. I used to go to the gym but because of the tablets prescribed for me, I was sensitive to them, so I started getting pains in my joints. So I met a friend once and I told her about it and she suggested that I joined the Norbury walk...I started walking, and it's going on three years now...p.18 19/3/09.</p> <p>...the benefit of actually getting the exercise...p.15 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>... I've only been walking since January...because I work at the school we got to find out about it. I was at the time saying to myself, "I should do more" but you just don't. I was catching two buses to work and two buses home and, you know, you think, "Oh, next week I'm going to have a walk on the green or something like that." But with different things, time or whatever you just don't. And I thought this is a good idea just to start me off...p.28 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I started walking to basically try and get a bit fitter, to lose a bit of weight and to have some fresh air. Because I'm basically a lazy person in exercise - exercise has never really appealed to me, but I thought having a walk, you know, that'll be fine, and I do enjoy it...p.30 12/3/09.</p> <p>...it's good for me. When I've finished, it's a job well done and I can feel proud of myself that I've actually forced myself to do something, you see, and I'm getting that little bit fitter. I'm not so -- when I first started I was [out-of-breath sound], I'm not so bad now, I'm getting better...p.31 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I do other fitness activities in the evening and I know the health benefits that come from doing things like that...p.32 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...So my doctor finally prescribed me, I had a bad back, and she said you need to do just go walking...p.30 26/3/09.</p> <p>...my husband had a heart attack and a bypass...and he was advised to go on the walks. So he used to go on the walks on his own because I was looking after my mother at the time. Eventually she passed away and I went on the walks with him...p.30 26/3/09.</p> <p>...Well I have only been walking since January with my husband, and it's because of him, he's (Inaudible)...now he is diabetic and he has got low blood pressure and we both retired last year...p.31 26/3/09.</p> <p>...Motivation, what we mean by that is you are inclined to try and keep up, you know, on a health, you know, point of view, if I was on my own I probably wouldn't be so long and might give up earlier... so there is this sort of motivation to complete the walk...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...but if I don't go on these walks I am not motivated, and right now I lack interest in a lot of things...p.29 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...I know I do have health issues, but my health issues are met each time. There is a risk assessment on the walks and some of them are difficult but not unmanageable, and to me it's like fresh air, every time I go out it's fresh air...p.19 18/3/09</p> <p>... when we got married we walked. But we both had health problems and the walking lapsed...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>... I've been ill, had a heart bypass in November. But because I'm walking I recovered very quick, and when I first arrived, everybody, every single one, came and gave me a hug and kiss. So many gave cards and flowers and messages, and came to see me in hospital. Really good friends I make. So if I don't go, I miss that...p.21 18/3/09.</p> <p>... then in 2002 I had cancer of the oesophagus. After that, I was a wreck. Then they started these walks round the Arrow Vale and they got me to go along. I was creeping round almost, to start with. Now I can keep up with most people. So it has done me the world of good...p.22 18/3/09.</p> <p>... it has made my wife's life better. She has got bad knees, she takes a pill before she starts walking, but she keeps going and she feels better afterwards...p.22 18/3/09.</p>	

Ref → Focus group 12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme			

... the doctor said "You've had a heart attack". And I couldn't believe it, because I'd never had any problems really. So that's when I went into sort of cardiac rehab. Came back to this country, latched onto the Hereford routine. Because, you know, if you're operated in Hereford you obviously get the rehab, but if you're overseas They did an angiogram and I had just one stent, so it wasn't too bad. I stayed another week in Cyprus, then they sent me home, with the -- I didn't need a doctor, it was long enough, the time had gone by, but they did lay on a car for me and got me home. Then the doctor got me on to the rehab. And then following on, because I didn't know what I could do and what I couldn't do and, you know, walking was obviously, everyone said it's the best thing, gentle walking to start with. So I did the exercises in the rehab, the first parts, 1 and 2, I think, and then went up to Hereford and picked up the leaflet on Walking for Life. So that's when I joined in, and it was the fact that it was a controlled environment with a leader and they sort of look after you...p.24-25 18/3/09.

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme			<p>... when we sold the shop my health wasn't that good, so when I went to the doctor he said "Are you doing any exercise?" At that time I wasn't doing any really, and then I joined this Walking for Health scheme which is run in Wolverhampton...p.26 18/3/09.</p>	

Table F Verbatim segments by theme - Environment

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Environment	<p>...We like fresh air...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...Like lots of free spaces...p.16 12/3/09.</p> <p>... all our routes are either along canals or in the country really...p.16 12/3/09.</p> <p>...it's like a nature reserve and it's got a big green space to walk. There's a stream through it and, you know, you hear woodpeckers and things. So, you know, it's nice...p.17 12/3/09.</p> <p>...There is more walks which I do intend to start looking it to see whether I could make them, because they are further afield, and it would be nicer scenery than what we have to look at at the moment...p.29 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I like having that bit of fresh air...it would be nice to try somewhere different...it would be nice to see a few more trees and a bit of greenery. So hopefully perhaps when the weather warms up and they start doing more walks...down the canal, I might try that...p.31 12/3/09.</p> <p>it's just somewhere different isn't it and you can see some wildlife sort of thing as well...p.32 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...It was a bit flat in some places and then it was quite hilly... But it sort of took your mind off it if you went at the pace you could do and you could see all the flowers coming through and it was really enjoyable...p.11 26/3/09.</p> <p>...this month is Addiscombe Park... it's beautiful in there, we walk all around and it's nice sun and lots of flowers...p.11 26/3/09.</p> <p>...the one I went on was generally flat, I understand they go on slightly more hilly walks, but they are generally flat... this is on Riddlesdale Common and the local woods...p.13 26/3/09.</p> <p>... Wednesdays we go to South Norwood Country Park...p.13 26/3/09.</p> <p>...Selsdon Woods, that's a lovely walk...p.14 26/3/09.</p> <p>...part of my wanting to walk is in a nice environment which is lovely out in the country park...p.14 26/3/09.</p> <p>...Also if you are walking more towards the back you can enjoy the environment more...p.14 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...We do different walks. The favourite ones is the park, which is nearby where most of the walkers live. It is just a stretch, we do laps, which is just over half a mile, one lap is, so people do as many as they want to...p.8 18/3/09.</p> <p>...another walk we do is along the canal path going from where we live into the town, walking along the canal bank...p.8 18/3/09.</p> <p>...occasionally we do longer walks for people who are a bit stronger like and people who are capable. So what we do is normally take them into a minibus at a place and then like there are some walks along the countryside, so we go along there in a minibus, park the minibus and do about six miles or whatever distance it is. Again, it is well marked out, so we follow the sign which says "Walkers right" and all that. And we do that especially in summer time...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...there is another old railway line to Monmouth, that is utilised as a town and country walk, and there's a big housing estate up there and there's lots of it. That's where we go...p.9 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I've done the Thursday one quite regularly and we walk through Heathfield, because you meet at Gravel Hill or you go the other side, and it's quite varied, you do get slopes and gentler hills, and it's a real mixture, so from that point of view it's good...p.7 19/3/09.</p> <p>...park, and Heathfield, there's actually a house there, so they've got gardens and there's also a little bit of Shirley Hills, so we go through woods and things, so it's a good mixture really. So those are quite good. And also another one I've done ...which is Selsdon Wood nature reserve, and that's a lovely walk, and there you've got a bit of a mixture of sort of slopes and going through trees and open land as well...p.8 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I do like the open countryside and even if, you know, some of them are quite repetitive in the way of where you walk, but I think with nature, every week it changes anyway...p.8 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>...and it's just nice to get outside. You know, working in an office with artificial light and everything like that, you know, I've always been sort of an outdoorsy sort of person, so I've always felt, you know, better for being outside. Even in the coldest days, you know, you sort of think, once you get walking you don't really notice the cold and you feel refreshed...p.33 12/3/09.</p> <p>...natural light and feeling the elements even, seeing the sky and not seeing walls, you know, and artificial light, just being connected with the world rather than in a box. I've always been outdoorsy. As a child, me and my neighbour, we used to go out for walks every night, you know, so I've always been interested in walking and just being outside...p.34 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I have a friend who belongs to another walking health group and they're in three sections and she's in the higher section, and apparently they walk so quickly. She's like me, she loves nature and the countryside. She said, "We walk so quickly you really haven't got time to enjoy it" and I think I couldn't cope with that, I don't think...p.35 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...sometimes the pressure is on for you to keep going, you can't actually stand, like on a frosty morning, just stand and say wow, look at that, isn't that beautiful... So for me that's part of the enjoyment. I just walk because - because, you know, it's always where you are, the beauty of Heathfield... Heathfield you go through this beautifully kept park...p.14 26/3/09.</p> <p>...It's the trees, the changing, weather, I find such beauty in the winter landscape I find as every bit as much that as I do in summer landscape...so I like to see where I am walking, like Autumn, contact with nature...p.17 26/3/09.</p> <p>...this is walking for health, so the emphasis is on walking for health rather than looking at the scenery. If I was to go on a different route or I was on my own then I would probably spend more time looking at the scenery, but on these walks it's supposed to be about the health walk, and so there isn't always time sort of to look at the birds or, you know, when you first started we took some binoculars for birds and so on, but there wasn't time...p.17 26/3/09.</p> <p>... Fresh air. You feel good right from the word go, the scenery it cheers you up...p.20 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...I'm fortunate to live in Ross on Wye, so we have the River Wye, that is one of the walks, the banks of the Wye. We meet in the centre of Ross and then we've got a choice really, fairly limited because we only walk for an hour and it's a fairly gentle walk, but we have the river bank along actually to where I live at Wilton, which means I'm doing that little stretch two or three times some days, but it's part of the regular routine...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>... At Redditch, we're based on Arrow Valley Lake, the Countryside Centre. We walk twice a week, around about three miles every Monday and about five, five and a half on a Thursday...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...Thursdays, it's five and a half miles, we go over rough country...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We walk around places like Telford town park, Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale, around the canals and the river down there, through Apley Park, Tee Lake, and also the Granville nature reserve, which is quite hard for me but it is within my capabilities. But it is usually those kind of gentle reserve-type things, parks...p.10 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I like the open countryside in perhaps specific weather: if it's windy I like to be in the woods where it's sheltered. And that's really it for me. I like it a lot. But I don't like too much mud...p.9 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I go on two walks a month in the countryside, meet at a car park, usually it's sort of Selsdon, Selsdon Wood...p.10 19/3/09.</p> <p>I do the Warlingham walks...one part of it is downland and one part is woodland, and we choose whichever part we think to suit the weather. It's very good, very varied, some nice views when you're up there, because you're quite high at Warlingham...p.10 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I like the open views of the countryside...p.12 19/3/09.</p> <p>... I like walking through woods, fields when the sun shines...p.13 19/3/09.</p> <p>... seeing the beautiful countryside so close at hand...p.17 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓	Theme			
	<p>...I go out walking by myself quite often because it allows me to do what I want to do. In other words, I can stop, I can look at birds...p.36 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...the parks, all the ducks and trees and blossoms and clouds going around, just makes you feel good to be alive. The herons at the Council Park...p.21 26/3/09.</p> <p>...We like the scenery, in particular I like the views...the natural environment, obviously flowers, trees and birds, whatever is interesting going on...p.22 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I would go on a longer walk which is over more hilly terrain, and I get more interest out of that. I don't like walking on tarmac...p.23 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...We do two walks: Monday in the village, we go in the village and either we go by the canal if the weather is nice, if it is not very wet, or we go through the fields. And the other walk is in Burton on Trent, we start around the Stapenhill Gardens where they have quite a few national walks, and then go by the rivers. And it's very, very nice during the summer, all flowers and very, very clean. And that's it. And one walk is about 75 minutes, the other is about 45 minutes. 45 minutes quite fast, the other is a bit slow, but there is all different walks for slow people or medium or fast...p.9-10 18/3/09.</p> <p>...they are generally around park-like areas...p.10 18/3/09.</p> <p>...On the likes we have got observing the countryside and other people's gardens when we're walking in the town a lot...p.11 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The Arrow Valley walk -- well, Redditch has got one big asset, that lake. There's so much variety. You get no traffic. It's beautiful there. You can do any type of walk you want, any distance you want... p.22 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The bird life. I like to see the birds. Birds with wings...p.13 18/3/09.</p>	

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
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Theme				

...we did have a local wildlife organisation came with us one day and threatened to come again, but it was interesting because I thought what are they going to see in December, you know, but there's lots of things growing in December and the river -- actually there were some particular ducks on the river that were quite interesting, Goosanders, which used to come once a year and they'd actually come back this year and they spotted them. So yes, that was good...p.11-12 18/3/09.

...I also like looking at a place where there is a variety of bird life, around the Arrow Valley Lake there's plenty...p.12 18/3/09.

...I like to see all the things around the walk, like gardens or go by the canal and see the birds and all sorts of things... Natural things, not artificial things...p.13 18/3/09.

...we like to see things on the way: natural beauty, the trees and the countryside, and particularly the wildlife... The ducks you like in particular, don't you...p.13 18/3/09.

...I like flat ground, interesting scenery, ie the countryside, plant life, we like to get away from built up areas...p.14 18/3/09.

Ref → Focus group 12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
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↓ Theme			
		<p>...we have a local nursery called Ashwood Nursery, you may have heard of it, may not have, and there's a lovely walk round Ashwood, you park your car, walk down the road to the canal, walk along the canal and walk back to Ashwood Nursery. It used to take 50 minutes, it's 1.95 miles and it was lovely because you'd see all the scenery, the wildlife on the canal and we've even picked damsons along the canal. And it used to be wonderful...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...our one joy is getting out and seeing the countryside instead of four walls...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We live a mile from the centre of Ross on Wye, we've got a nice walk by the river, so we did make a definite decision to walk into town when we can...p.24 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The person in charge of the walk generally rings him up and the guide generally offers for free his time and everything. And he will explain as we go along, he might say "There's a tree with a cuckoo's nest" and all that, or explain a tiny bit about the history of the area and so on. I think it's all done by the person who is in charge...p.26 18/3/09.</p>	

Table G Verbatim segments by theme - Background

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Background	<p>...I've always been sort of an outdoorsy sort of person...p.33 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I have a walking history because I started when I was in my 30s. I went with a friend, we used to go up to the Lake District, so it's really sort of hard walking over there, if you've ever been up there, 15 miles over the fells (inaudible). Then gradually our lives sort of changed and I sort of didn't do a lot of walking then...p.36 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...Well I personally...I do like to see the history of the area, I like, sometimes I even ring up to find out what is going on... but it's the place itself, or if a house the architecture.p.22 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I would like there to be a bit more background information to the walks so that one gets, one just doesn't go for the walk itself, but also for where you are walking through and I hope that perhaps the local Council with their partners can provide us a short fact sheet with possibly environmental and historical things that you can look at as you go through wherever you are...p.29 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...I think the walking is in the genes, we used to live on a farm and the farmers, parents, everywhere in them days you have to go, you have to walk. Then I had a job in the forest department in India, I was posted in the Himalayas. There was no transport. Wherever you go you have to walk, no choice. And you didn't think about the distance or the danger, just go and come back... I always liked the outside jobs and everything. When I came to this country I had a job on the building sites, I was always more or less outside in the cities and the towns. And then had a newsagent shop, I used to go and deliver papers, I never thought about anything, just pick the bag up and go. And always for about 20 years it never bothered me, whether rain, snow, frost, it didn't bother me at all, just go. And now I've started walking, I just love it. I just love it. See different things, meet different people, every day almost. I just like it. And that's it. I don't know what else I can say...p.21 18/3/09.</p> <p>...I've always walked in my life, and cycled a lot, except when I was in London when I relied on the underground really, and the trams in those days... p.24 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I found myself running the youth club, and then of course went into the realms of the usual bank holiday hike , plus the midnight hikes which used to leave me in absolute terror because you never knew what they were up to of course. And then of course the church used to run church holidays and then walking on those. And so, yes, I've spend much of my life one way or other involved with walking... p.22 19/3/09.</p> <p>...well I come from the countryside in Ireland, Donegal, and that has always been in my system and I longed for that freedom that we had as children. So that's where my love of walking starts... p.19 19/3/09.</p> <p>...Before I came to England, I used to walk in Germany but that usually was the whole weekend, you know, you set off and walk and you used to walk all day and then sleep overnight in a youth hostel and then, you know, make your way back the day after. But then I've been married twice and both my husbands didn't like walking. So there was a big lull. I mean it was the children but it was other things as well, you know...p.18 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group 12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme		<p>...Basically I come from a sports-mad family, the whole lot of us. All my life, mad keen on sport. Walking started basically as an extension of it. I used to do a lot of climbing in Austria. And on my 40s, 50s, 60s, I did most of the Wainwright walks up in the Lake District. So my ambition now is to repeat the walks, but I'm afraid that I'm, to coin a phrase, knackered. It would be during the winter, my main sports. In the summer I was doing long distance, I did most of the long distance paths, with friends and the rest of it. We did the Wainwright Way coast-to-coast two or three times, which is quite a walk. But that's my life, or has been...p.22 18/3/09.</p> <p>...I mean, I've always walked in my life, and cycled a lot, except when I was in London when I relied on the underground really, and the trams in those days...p.24 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The most interesting one, strangely enough, is around the streets in Stourbridge. There is an old quarter in Stourbridge, very, very nice old houses, there is a very tiny park, and most of us really like that because we do a lot of peering into gardens and through front windows...p.10 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I've always liked walking from childhood...p.18 19/3/09.</p> <p>...Well, I actually started walking as teenager when I belonged to a youth club, so I have really walked all my life, with intermittent break. And then I belonged to a social club, when my husband was running the walks, which we did once a month...p.17 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
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Theme				

...but I've been interested in walking since a long time in fact, and I used to do sponsored walks for Compton Hospice in Wolverhampton, a charity walk, which I did for a number of years really. We used to own a newsagent as well at one time, and so if the paper lad didn't turn up we had to put a bag on and start delivering the papers ourselves. So that I did, not regularly but, you know, when someone doesn't turn up...p.25-26 18/3/09.

...Walking to me was part of everyday life when I was a child. I grew up in Ireland until I was 12 and we walked everywhere, we literally did. Moving here, I carried on a while, but once we moved here I became my mother's carer - - not just my mother, there's nine of us, so i became carer for the nine of us. So I was basically restricted to home: go to school; stay home...p19 18/3/09.

...As a child, my father loved the countryside. Although we were in the Black Country we were always out at weekends going blackberrying and walking up in the area where we now live, which was open fields at the time...p.19 18/3/09.

Table H Verbatim segments by theme - Lifestyle

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Lifestyle	<p>...if there was a parking charge they would -- a lot of people would stop coming...p.21 12/3/09.</p> <p>...When you do a walk you get a little stamp on your ticket and when you've got 12 stamps it becomes worth £2.40 and you can take it to...about eight cafés within the Sandwell... Now, that is obviously funded by the Primary Care Trust...I've asked people, "Would you come if you didn't have the card?" and they said yes, they would still do the walk...It's a bonus...p.21 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I have to say the first time I went, you know, I didn't know, I just saw it in an outdoor magazine, and I was genuinely surprised there wasn't a charge, genuinely surprised... we pay for a tea and coffee, but I thought it would be like £2 to go on the walk or something...p.21-22 12/3/09.</p> <p>... someone can just turn up and go...p.9 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...Routine, I have put that because having retired (Inaudible) and having a routine, you know, Mondays Lloyd Park...it's punctuating the week...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I have been waking up to the alarm clock for fifty years and then suddenly you don't have to. It's terrible, it feels awful and you keep thinking you haven't got, that's what you want to do, you appreciate people at work, you miss all that, definitely, well I do. And the laughter and the tears that you have you don't get that any more...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...punctuating the week...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I think having a sort of a routine, you know, we know what day of the week it is because it's, you know, it's a Monday walk around Lloyd Park, that's something to look forward to...p.28 26/3/09.</p> <p>...I couldn't get out of my bed before nine o'clock any morning because I had no reason to get up, except when I go on walks...p.29 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...we have the river bank along actually to where I live at Wilton, which means I'm doing that little stretch two or three times some days, but it's part of the regular routine...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...we always know where we're going to meet in the appropriate week...p.10 18/3/09.</p> <p>... Nice gentle walks, no problem. And I got into the habit, and also, you know, it sort of made me do it: Thursday morning, it's a walk day. It doesn't matter, everything else went by the board, walk on a Thursday...p.25 18/3/09.</p> <p>... And Wolverhampton at the moment has got a scheme as well where you get this financial -- there's a voucher...At some sports shops they give you 10 per cent off as well, because the scheme gives you a sort of an ID card which gives you a number or whatever, and if you show that at certain shops they give you 10 per cent or so discount as well...p.26 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...it's just the fact that you get up in the morning without thinking about anything but you focus on the walk, "Right, I'm going on the walk today"...and then you can do all the other mundane stuff that you don't really like doing, to get it done so that you can go on the walk...p.20 19/3/09.</p> <p>...I started doing another degree and what I found was I was walking in the mornings and studying in the afternoon, so I found that sort of the timings worked out well...p.8 19/3/09.</p> <p>...And there's quite a lot of different start times so they can fit in with your social calendar...and also the opportunity to walk every day, not that you necessarily want to but because they are on, if you can't do Monday you can do Friday...p.14 19/3/09.</p> <p>...the fact that you don't have to arrange it with anybody, you can turn up...it is so important, because sometimes things turn up and you can't go...p.14-15 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>...Time pressure...like when we go we know we've got to hurry up and get back, got to go back, get changed and everything and go off to work... It's a good thing and it's a bad thing. It's good that you can still it for the hour and a half, but then if you want to go on longer you can't, you've got to stop and think and you've got to get back...p.12 12/3/09.</p> <p>...there's a reservoir nearby which would be nice to get to but, you know, obviously people have got work commitments. Yeah, some people wouldn't be able to come, I suppose...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...Close to home. Our walks are very close to home, which I think is a good thing because otherwise you've got to find transport and means of getting there and back...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...if we don't go off until, say, ten to 11, which I don't think we did yesterday, and there are people who have got things to do the other end, they're getting a bit anxious...p.19 12/3/09.</p> <p>...What we're actually getting now is a lot of people have been made redundant, so a lot of men are now joining, you know, who have been redundant. They just want something to do...p.20 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...I just wish the walks were a bit longer, it's only an hour around the park. So what we did the last time, everybody headed back...and we just stayed on and we went around the park again, which was nice, you know. So, you know, we like it, we like it very much. It has done him good...p.31 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...Two and a half years ago my name was given forward to the Carers Association and they contacted me and, through them, I started the walks. It's within the timeframe that I've got. We all have timeframes unfortunately as carers, so we are limited...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>...My walking started really because I wouldn't fly many years ago, and so we used to go over to France and places like that, but we found out the Lake District and to me that's beautiful, and most of the places in the Lake District Sylvia and I have walked, and we used to enjoy ourselves thoroughly going out and spending all day just walking...p.18 18/3/09.</p>	

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				

...I was going to say I think there's two types of walkers, the people who just do it to be social and to have a bit of exercise and serious walkers who will go out and hike and look round at the scenery. I think you've got to decide which one you are...38-39 12/3/09.

Table I Verbatim segments by theme - Walk type

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Walk type	<p>...the route...it's the same...boring...p.9 12/3/09.</p> <p>...We don't do other routes, we just do the same route so it can be a bit boring because you're just going round the same place...we've got a field...and we just walk around the path...so you're going round in a circle and it can be a bit boring...p.15 12/3/09.</p> <p>...if you stick to the one it can be a bit boring because you're just going round and round...p.15 12/3/09.</p> <p>...we have about six, say six different routes. I mean even those you think, "Oh, I wish I could go somewhere else"...p.16 12/3/09.</p> <p>...Well, what I found that I liked was getting to know the local area where I live but I don't know half the places to go. I found three different parks I didn't know were there...p.9 12/3/09.</p> <p>...I've enjoyed meeting everybody and seeing like the local area and enjoy the walks...p.28 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...if you go on the walk in the first place you know where to go, you can go back later and do it at your own pace. If you didn't go on the walk in the first place you wouldn't know where it was...p.18 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...Originally when we started two years ago it was always round the park in Stourbridge. Because we got bored with that, the leaders, who are fantastic, devised some other walks for us and we now have five walks that we can do...p.10 18/3/09.</p> <p>...we are looking for new walks all the time... p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The walk we used to do was round Mary Stevens Park, you will probably know it, and it's lovely, we used to go round Mary Stevens Park, the lake there with all different birdlife on there, and then we used to go out into one of the nice estates and come back, and we did that each week, and so therefore it becomes boring. So you need to have a different avenue to go. And that's what we're looking for, not all the time, but if we could have say 10 venues where we have 10 weeks as we're going to go to different places, that would be lovely...p.18-19 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We belong to Age Concern. It's a gentle walking group, we walk for between 45 minutes and an hour...p.10 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...the different walks which are offered each day, actually it's quite important I think, it gives you a choice throughout the week...p.13 19/3/09.</p> <p>...sometimes you feel "Oh, we've been down here before". It's not a major gripe and they do try to vary it. Some of the places we've been to, you think "Oh, I haven't been along here before", so it does actually sometimes cut both ways...p.14 19/3/09.</p> <p>...We like the varied terrain, level and undulating, and the fact that the walks are varied, you go to different paths, different scenery. And also the varied lengths of the walk, you can walk from 1 mile up to 4...p.14 19/3/09</p> <p>...of course, all I'd heard about New Addington was the fact that it was just like a council estate so I had never been up there. We got off the tram and within like a few minutes, there was this beautiful countryside around, and I thought well, all these people who live on the council estate have got these lovely views, lovely countryside. But I have lived here for 20 years and never been up there, just spent all my time in London, really...p.17-18 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
	<p>...Getting familiar with the local area...you know, sometimes places on your doorstep, you don't really know are there...I've only walked to the cemetery once and didn't realise how huge it was, there's the old bit and new bit. I mean I'm quite a walker myself anyway, but I know that, you know, quite a few people hadn't been to the Millennium Green that we walk through, so, you know, it's opening their eyes to stuff that's on the doorstep...p.17 12/3/09.</p>		<p>...I walk with the Carers' Association and we have very gentle walks most of the time, between an hour and a half, two hours...p.10 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We don't like short distances, some of us don't like short distances...p.12 18/3/09.</p> <p>...we dislike totally uneven ground, uninteresting areas, ie derelict ground, wasted ground, industrial areas, poorly kept areas and excessive litter...p.14 18/3/09.</p> <p>...I have my own personal opinion about the rough ground and the faster pace but, as I said, there are two walks we run, and one is different to the other. We appreciate it won't suit everyone...p.14 18/3/09.</p> <p>...As we said, our walk's between three-quarters of an hour to an hour. The one walk we don't particularly like, it's in a poor area of Stourbridge although it was quite a good area at one time, but it's very uneven and you can't walk three or four abreast, so that makes it even worse...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We don't have any experts on our walks...p.20 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...And also we did one walk which was all the Croydon parks...and I hadn't been to these places. I had been living in Croydon all that time but never been there. So it has been good from that point of view to get to know the local area...p.18 19/3/09.</p> <p>...you can get to know interesting places. I mean, I would never have thought of doing the bridges of London or anything...p.18 19/3/09.</p>

Table J Verbatim segments by theme - Achievement

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Achievement	<p>...We have a pedometer so it's always interesting to find out how many steps you've actually done at the end of the walk...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...And when you finish, when you've been out for at least an hour walking, although you're tired you feel good tired...p.13 12/3/09.</p> <p>...It's good for me. When I've finished, it's a job well done and I can feel proud of myself that I've actually forced myself to do something, you see, and I'm getting that little bit fitter...p.31 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...Feel good factor, so, you feel as though you have...you have achieved something, you feel better...p.18 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...Walking I like, and health walking particularly. I like challenging routes, at a fast pace...p.12 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The fast pace is the thing. Particularly over rugged terrain, that's my ideal...p.13 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We have one group that likes the rough ground and the fast walking. There's one hill on ours, we call it "cardiac hill", it goes up and up and up...p.14 18/3/09.</p> <p>...It's a new challenge if you have a new walk...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...It's the enthusiasm of the people that walk. They may be limited, as we are, compared perhaps maybe to you, who does 6 or 8 miles without thinking about it. What we do must seem very meagre, but to us it's a magnificent achievement. You know, if your knee is particularly bad, you I think "Oh, I'll put the extra bandage on it today"...p.20 18/3/09.</p> <p>...As I say, last year we started again doing the Wainwright walks. We did four last year. We intend to go walking in Austria again shortly. We're going into Italy to the mountains there in May of this year. To me, it's a way of life. But you feel such a sense of achievement when you've done something, that's a big point...p.22 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...Yes, it's very challenging. The person who does the walk, he can walk and he's always saying "If you don't get breathless, you're not walking"...I usually go on the fast one. When you walk on the slow walk it makes you feel tired...p.9 19/3/09.</p> <p>...Into Shirley Hills on a Monday usually. The challenge for that is you go up the hill in Croham, which is quite a long steep walk...p.11 19/3.09.</p>

Table K Verbatim segments by theme - Safety

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				
Safety	<p>...ice...we cancelled actually which we rarely do...p.14 12/3/09.</p> <p>... we have to be conscious with access really...there's parents with pushchairs...there is the canal right next to the school which should be good, but there's lots of steps down, you know. We could probably do it if there's one or two and all helping each other to carry the pushchairs down. But that's a bit restrictive. You know, just trying to get places that have got nice paths and not all just, you know, busy roads. You know, a bit of greenery...there are a few places to choose from...p.18 12/3/09.</p> <p>...The other thing is toilet facilities...because some of them come a distance and they drive there and they need toilet facilities...p.22 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...I did go on the five mile one at Godstone... it was too hilly for myself, I have got half a lung missing and I just couldn't, I did do it, but I was right at the end, you know, the whole time. So I know for myself just go for the flat ones...p.15 26/3/09.</p> <p>... Well there are times when it's rainy and it's muddy...A bit dangerous because you can fall and break a leg or something...so that's not so nice, I suppose...p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...Not if it is actually pouring with rain, no... p.18 26/3/09.</p> <p>...with me I think there is only a couple of times when it has been raining, but it has been muddy and you simply can't go...p.19 26/3/09.</p> <p>...steep hills are just not for me...p.21 26/3/09.</p> <p>...and snow and ice well I don't think I would on them because it's risky, who wants to break a leg, you know...p.21 26/3/09.</p> <p>...some of the walks are far away and if you haven't got a car... that's a bit difficult for some of the walks you know, Godstone, you know, it's difficult to get to...p.22 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...there is also the old railway line to Hereford, that's another nice walk, as long as the weather has been reasonable, it gets a bit muddy -- I know you like mud but we don't. Our ladies don't...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...Dislike: fields with farm animals. They frighten Jaswant. We don't suffer from that. Stiles in general, that was another one of Jaswant's. I mean some of those are pretty -- you need to be 6 foot tall to get over them, you know... And if it is raining and all that, you have to be careful... And they are not always well maintained...p.12 18/3/09.</p> <p>...also the bad weather...p.12 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We both like even ground, and flat walks. We like the walks to be fairly easy for us, in a way...p.13 18/3/09.</p> <p>...I suppose in a way we're just reiterating there that neither of us really likes hills. I can't bear muddy uneven ground. And gradients went in: as opposed to things going down rather than up, gradients in general, where particularly it is rough. I'm not the best of walkers, I have one or two sort of knee problems, but one of our ladies finds this very difficult. We want to encourage her to walk, so we do try to avoid this type of problem for her in particular...p.13 18/3/09.</p> <p>...we do dislike bad weather but, you know, you cope with that...p.14 18/3/09.</p>	<p>...I don't like too much mud...p.9 19/3/09.</p> <p>...And I don't like the rain of course, nobody likes it, but we have our walk whatever...p.13 19/3/09.</p> <p>...the leaders of the walks...seem to me to go to infinite trouble and are very solicitous for the welfare of everybody...keeping an eye on everybody and knowing what's going on, and they do that extremely well...p.20 19/3/09.</p> <p>...As a woman, I wouldn't walk through the woods and fields if I was by myself...p.22 19/3/09.</p>

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme	<p>...dislike the varying level of fitness in the group because we've got sort of probably sometimes, I suppose on average, about 35 and because we've got two leaders, one at the front and one at the back, it stretches out, and that is a real problem. Because if someone falls - and we've got people in their 80s who are walkers, there are not many but a few, if they fall there's no one...p.9 12/3/09.</p> <p>...traffic...We walk through the cemetery and I've realised people from one side of the main road are using the cemetery to cut through, to stop going round two islands, so they're just coming straight through and it's dangerous...p.16 12/3/09.</p> <p>...The other thing is toilet facilities...because some of them come a distance and they drive there and they need toilet facilities...p.22 12/3/09.</p>	<p>...it's easier on your feet and all that, but sometimes as long as it's not muddy, I do it... (tarmac) p.24 26/3/09.</p> <p>...obviously if it's pouring with rain it's not worth going out...p.24 26/3/09.</p> <p>....And it does slow people down, obviously they are walking a bit more carefully...thirty people is probably a bit too many because it is wet, it was wet that day, they are stringing out, they are careful and, you know, that adds to the slowness...p.24 26/3/09.</p> <p>...The other walks we go on we haven't missed any, despite the weather...p.28 26/3/09.</p>	<p>...Oh yes, we go whatever the weather, whether it's ice on the ground, whether it's raining. The ice was a problem a week ago. It doesn't deter...p.14 18/3/09.</p> <p>... as we got older, we couldn't walk some of the walks, the hill climbs and what have you, that Wainwright used to do, which we had done. And we got to the point where, we have a local nursery called Ashwood Nursery, you may have heard of it, may not have, and there's a lovely walk round Ashwood, you park your car, walk down the road to the canal, walk along the canal and walk back to Ashwood Nursery...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...We don't enjoy it if it's raining -- well, we don't go, but if it's raining on your walk, fine...p.18 18/3/09.</p> <p>...There are markers all the way through, as many as seven or eight markers sometimes, some walks, people wander up and down, seeing if we're okay. There is at least four first-aiders on every walk...p.9 18/3/09.</p> <p>...But again, with the health and safety, which I mean is absolutely ridiculous, where we're told we can't do that walk because we haven't tested it, because, because, because -- that's sad...p.19 18/3/09.</p> <p>...The leaders that we've got are very good, two very caring ladies, excellent, but they're not out to teach us anything, they're there to protect us...p.20 18/3/09.</p>	

Ref → Focus group	12/03/09 (new)	26/03/09 (new)	18/03/09 (exp)	19/03/09 (exp)
↓ Theme				

...Well, I do think sometimes that, I think it's this health and safety issue that people of our generation, or certainly Bob and I, I can't speak for everyone, do find a little bit over the top. We are adults, we are not in need of every walk has to be risk managed, and that I do find at times quite tiresome. I have to say the ladies that organise our walks are realising, and it's not just Bob and I within our group, I think we all feel much the same, they are realising that and they will now only point out perhaps serious hazards to us...p.15 18/3/09.

Appendix 6 Themed wishes for the future - extracted from flip chart notes

Walking Wish Wall

From all 4 focus groups

- 1 dot allocated to each person to indicate highest priority for them

Variety

- Different walks ...
- Transport available for the further afield walks ...
- Change the route when the weather is good ..
- Walk to include visit to stately home with guide re history ..
- A bit more variation of the routes •
- Different locations •
- Finding different areas to walk •
- Walk further afield •
- Vary the time of days ie early am and late pm
- Easier walks for those with minor disabilities
- A weekend away walk with transport provided
- One or two more walks per week of a different location. In order to facilitate this it might be necessary to cancel one or two of the present walks because not enough leaders. The next problem would be where would the new walks be and which walks would be cancelled- Tricky one this!
- Finding different routes

Longer, more walks

- Maybe longer flatter walks •
- Opportunity to walk 6 miles now and again •
- Some walks could be longer depending on the terrain
- Increase distance
- Go on a walking holiday say to Europe
- Go on a walking tour say long distance paths in this country
- Walk twice a week

Appreciation of environment and history, exploration

- Walks to include appreciation of the environment •
- Walk in different environments, for example, country canals
- Country walks/town walks
- Scenic routes
- Continuation
- Easier access
- More time to explore
- Walking in the Peak district or Yorkshire Dales
- Some information handed out before walk starts - ie history or wildlife of the area •
Personally to repeat Wainwright walks

Health and physical activity, personal development

- Wish to walk all my life and be healthy ••••
- Walks are fine, most enjoyable but please slow down a bit •
- Suspend time clock
- Monitor health progress
- Maintain fitness levels
- Get fit enough to do serious rambling say for ½ or full day
- To keep getting fitter
- Pushing yourself to do a bit extra
- Keep blood pressure down and keep weight down and keep mobility up
- Able to enjoy holidays
- To see the Arrowdale walks to continue to gradual improvements of standards
- To take on more responsibility

Size of group

- Groups to be smaller - 60 people too many •
- Split walks when over a certain number

Social aspects

- Family involvement •
- New leaders •
- New walkers •
- To have a successful walking group •
- More interaction with group leaders
- More interaction from leaders- better training
- Be friendlier for new comers (it can get clicky)
- All Croydon groups to meet quarterly for a walk.
- A bigger social group
- Expanding the group

Information and communication

- More publicity of walks such as in local free newspapers
- Communication - for example, newsletter of events
- More info readily available with detail re type of walk
- More interest from local councils

Safety and comfort

- Not to be over protected •
- Help with the purchase of walking boots etc in conjunction with local shops
- Leaders to have first aid knowledge
- Toilets/café

Incentives

- A little incentive
- More rewards
- Get incentive vouchers



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