

'Step Out Sheffield'

Health Walks accredited by Ramblers: Walking for Health

Information sheet for walkers

Welcome to the Sheffield health walk scheme. We hope you enjoy your walk and will continue to walk with us in the future.

The Sheffield scheme is one of 400 'Walking for Health' schemes across the country. The idea for health walks began in 1998 with an Oxfordshire GP. He had a wonderful green open space near to his surgery and thought this would be a great place for his patients to exercise regularly for up to an hour at a time. He and a couple of staff promoted the walks from the surgery and met each week to deliver them. The word spread, the concept of 'health walks' took hold and soon health walks popped up all over the country. Sheffield started their walks in April 1999 with just one walk a week. Now we have 26 weekly walks across the city and another walk under development.

Some information you will need to know:

- Our walks are free and open to everyone
- Most medical conditions benefit from a health walk
- As well as exercising on a health walk you socialise with like-minded people in your local area
- There are trained leaders on all walks. ALL the leaders are volunteers!
- All walks are risk assessed and safe for all
- Health walks differ from rambles as they are limited to one hour, meant for people with a medical condition to manage, and are delivered at a pace that is comfortable for the walkers. The pace is **not** set by the walk leader but by the walkers themselves!

Step out Sheffield health walks are exclusively led by volunteers. Please bear this in mind. These volunteers have given up their time to get trained and regularly give up their time to help deliver your walk. Please treat them with **respect**. Abusive, disruptive and inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Our volunteer walk leaders do a fantastic job and without them there wouldn't be a walk in your area.

When you first come along on a walk you will be asked to complete a Ramblers: Walking for Health registration form. This is partially to inform your walk leaders about any medical problems you have. Furthermore, the volunteer leaders are not insured to take you walking without your completed

registration form. Personal information disclosed on your registration form is securely kept on the national database operated by Ramblers: Walking for Health. Step out Sheffield also holds your contact details. Once again, this information is secure.

If any of your circumstances change (e.g., health, phone number or address) in future please inform your walk leaders so they can arrange for your details to be updated. An emergency contact name & telephone number is required for all walkers. Thankfully this is rarely needed but essential - just in case!

If at any time you are not feeling well, please make it known to a volunteer walk leader and they will look after you.

Start the walks at **your** pace, not that of the walker in front, and progress at a pace you are comfortable with! Our walks are meant to be enjoyed, not endured, so do things at a pace that's suitable for you. If you can walk briskly (as if late for a bus) the benefits are tremendous, but *any* walking is better than none. We want you to enjoy the company and Sheffield's lovely green spaces.

Everyone knows their own capabilities so listen to your own body. Please don't expect volunteer leaders to make decisions for you! Look after yourself. If the weather is extreme, e.g., very hot, very cold, icy, windy or snowy, use your common sense and only walk if you feel it is safe for you to do so. Please don't expect the leaders to carry water, sun-screen, waterproofs, hats etc. for you. Please wear sensible clothing and footwear. We understand not everyone is comfortable in walking-boots but be aware that on some walks you may encounter water, mud and uneven surfaces, so come prepared, and bring along your medication (e.g., inhalers) if required.

Come along and try a walk... We have some great parks, woodlands and green spaces in Sheffield. We are, after-all, the greenest city in Europe! Don't walk on your own, come and feel safe with like-minded people. New friends are waiting to be made and new locations are waiting to be discovered...!

If you have any further questions, please phone our helpline: **07505639524**
For lots more information about all our walks please visit our website:

www.healthwalksinffield.btck.co.uk