

Walking Scotland

Your national walking and wheeling charity

Step It Up

Our strategy



Welcome

Kevin Lafferty, CEO of Walking Scotland

Step It Up is our strategy for 2025 and beyond. It sets out how we plan to create a happier, healthier and greener nation where everyone can walk and wheel every day.

I'm proud to be part of Walking Scotland because I can see the dedication, innovation and hard work happening to support people in Scotland to walk or wheel every day. I've been moved to hear stories of how life-changing walking can be.

Walking is great for our physical, social and mental health. It is one of the easiest and most accessible forms of physical activity and has a range of benefits. From increased fitness, improved sleep to living better with health conditions and enjoying an overall higher quality of life. Walking also increases our social interactions, our connectedness to nature, and makes our villages, towns and cities happier and healthier places to be. Walking has population level-health benefits and contributes to the public health goal of 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity activity. That's the power of walking!

As Scotland looks to the future, we see walking and wheeling as one of the best ways to address some of the greatest challenges of our time including health inequalities, physical inactivity, and the climate-nature emergency.

We're determined to get more people walking and wheeling in Scotland and we need your help and support to get everyone moving.

Now is the time to Step It Up. By doing more to promote walking and wheeling as the natural choice, for everyone, every day and everywhere we'll improve people's lives and create a happier, healthier, and greener Scotland.



Why walking matters





Walking is an easy, effective and accessible way to improve physical, social and mental health.

Going for a walk each day can boost physical, mental and social health. Being active helps prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and depression. And if people walk in nature, especially with others, these positive health effects are even greater. We'll work to create and promote more opportunities to walk daily for leisure and getting to school, shops and services.

Walking is a way to tackle inactivity and health inequalities on a population-wide scale.

A lack of facilities and poorly maintained pavements, paths and routes have made it harder for some people to walk and wheel and access local greenspaces. This means they're less likely to be active, and more likely to feel lonely and isolated. To tackle inequalities in access to everyday walking and wheeling, sustainable travel and outdoor physical activity, we'll focus on championing inclusion, removing barriers and supporting those who are most inactive.

Walking is part of the response to the climate-nature emergency.

As the cleanest form of transport, walking and wheeling sit at the top of the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy. We'll be supporting communities and local authorities to enable behaviour change and to create good environments for walking and wheeling with effective and affordable public transport connections. We will champion planning and policy which make walking and wheeling a natural choice for short daily journeys, to help Scotland meet its net zero goals and tackle the climate-nature emergency.

Collaborating for change

None of our work happens in isolation. Walking and wheeling contribute to improved outcomes within health, transport, planning, environment and physical activity promotion. They should be embedded in all of those systems.

Our trusted partnerships and Scotland-wide network put us in the perfect position to spot opportunities for connections and collaboration. We support local authorities and communities to develop inclusive environments for everyone to be active, including walkers and wheelchair and mobility aid users.

We support programmes that increase use of sustainable transport and build capacity within communities. And we champion the creation of walkable environments with access to quality greenspaces, close to where people live, so being active is easy for everyone.



Our vision

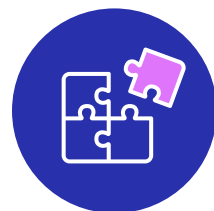
Scotland is a walking nation. Everyone has the opportunity to walk and wheel every day, ensuring a happier, healthier and greener Scotland.

Our values



Integrity

Our work is driven by evidence, impact and improvement. We trust and listen to our partners and the communities we work with. We are open, flexible and fair. We walk our talk.



Collaboration

Working in partnership means we all achieve more. We turn national policy and practice into local actions that make a real difference to people in their communities.



Innovation

We are confident, positive and future-focused. We embrace new technology and creative, diverse ways of working to achieve our goals.



Ambition

We want long lasting social change. Creating a Scotland where everyone walks and wheels every day means we will always choose the bold path.

Our mission

To support people in Scotland to be active every day. We believe walking and wheeling is the best way to do this. To change the way people move, travel and enjoy life in Scotland, our work will focus on three themes:

Walking and wheeling is for everyone

Everyone in Scotland, no matter who they are or where they live, should benefit from walking and wheeling.

Walking and wheeling is for everywhere

Our places and spaces should be safe and attractive for everyone to walk and wheel in. If our towns, cities and rural areas are designed and managed for walking and wheeling, we will reduce car use, improve connectedness and allow everyone to benefit from accessing natural environments.

Walking and wheeling is for every day

Everyone in Scotland should feel motivated to walk and wheel every day. By making walking and wheeling the default choice for short journeys, leisure, socialising or a part of longer public transport journeys, we will improve physical, mental and social health, and support Scotland's journey to net zero.



How will we change behaviours?

To achieve our mission, we have structured our work around the four key objectives in the WHO Global Action Plan for Physical Activity. Our strategy also contributes to and is informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for Scotland, Scotland's National Performance Framework and the Physical Activity for Health – Scotland's National Framework.



Creating a walking society

Changing social norms and increasing positive attitudes towards walking and wheeling.

We will:

Work to change Scottish cultural norms, behaviours, and opinions on walking and wheeling through our communication and campaign work.

Promote walking as the best investment for Scotland, in line with the National Walking Framework.

Raise awareness of the benefits of walking for all and increase professional knowledge and skills in health, transport, planning, education, tourism and recreation, sports and wellness, and in grassroots community groups.

Champion inclusive and accessible opportunities to walk and wheel for all, focusing communications on those experiencing inequalities.

Creating walking environments

Making places and spaces safe and attractive for walking and wheeling.

We will:

Manage and fund the development, maintenance and promotion of places and spaces, paths and routes for everyone to walk and wheel.

Champion best practice design standards to improve our walking and wheeling environment (urban and rural) and infrastructure, to provide local, accessible and enjoyable opportunities to walk and wheel for everyone.

Promote our places and spaces to increase use of paths, parks, urban greenspaces, coasts, canals, and forests as ideal places to walk and wheel, improve health and wellbeing, and support climate change mitigation.

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Creating active people

Encouraging behaviour change and participation in daily walking and wheeling through the right programmes, infrastructure and community opportunities.

We will:

Deliver and fund evidence-based behaviour change programmes in our communities, workplaces and education settings with a focus on the least active groups.

Manage and expand the Scottish Health Walk Network to increase walking and wheeling levels and support the reduction in health inequalities.

Promote walking and wheeling as an option for short daily journeys, including as part of longer public transport journeys and for leisure, to improve health and to protect the planet.

Creating walking systems

Strengthening leadership, partnerships and policy to make Scotland a walking and wheeling nation.

We will:


Influence policy across all relevant sectors relating to walking and wheeling, by encouraging, advocating and enabling change, and sharing knowledge and best practice.

Enhance data-gathering, research and evaluation of walking and wheeling, and behaviour change programmes and activities to increase the evidence base, share learning and strengthen advocacy for walking and wheeling.

Be the leading voice for walking and wheeling in Scotland to advocate for those who could benefit the most.

Our strategy

Our Vision



Scotland is a walking nation. Everyone has the opportunity to walk and wheel, creating a happier, healthier and greener Scotland.

Our Themes



Walking and wheeling is for everyone

Walking and wheeling is for everywhere

Walking and wheeling is for every day

Our Mission



Our mission is to support people in Scotland to be active every day. We believe walking and wheeling is the best way to do this.

Our Objectives

Creating a walking society

Changing social norms and increasing positive attitudes towards walking and wheeling.

Creating walking environments

Making places and spaces safe and attractive for walking and wheeling.

Creating walking systems

Strengthening leadership, partnerships and policy to make Scotland a walking and wheeling nation.

Creating active people

Encouraging behaviour change and participation in daily activity through the right programmes, infrastructure and community opportunities.

We are Scotland's walking and wheeling charity. Walking Scotland is a partnership of 30 national organisations with a shared vision of a healthier, happier, and greener Scotland, where everyone has the opportunity to be active every day.

Measuring success

To measure the impact of our work and the projects we fund and support, we will track progress through reporting, and analyse this against national indicators.

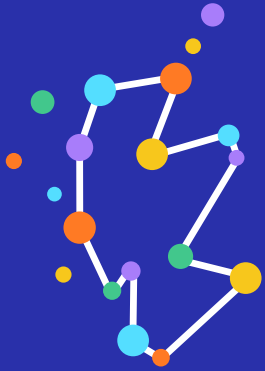
Want to get involved?

Interested in joining Walking Scotland's mission as we work to create a happier, healthier, and greener Scotland? Get in touch at hello@walkingscotland.org.uk.

You can also stay up to date by signing up to our newsletter and connecting with us on social media.

walkingscotland.org.uk





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