



**Walking  
Scotland**

Walking Workplaces

A guide to

# Walking Meetings





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# What is a walking meeting?

A walking meeting is a meeting that takes place while walking or wheeling, rather than sitting at a desk or meeting room table. They are typically held outdoors. They may also take place indoors where larger office spaces or corridors offer space for movement. Walking meetings should welcome people of all abilities, including those who use a wheelchair or walking aid.

Walking meetings are a simple way to hold workplace discussions while offering a break from the desk, promoting physical activity and boosting mental wellbeing. Walking meetings also encourage colleagues to talk in a relaxed, engaging and open manner.

This guide will help you to plan and run your own walking meetings.



## Why choose a walking meeting?

Walking meetings offer many benefits for you and your colleagues.

**Better physical health:** walking helps you meet daily activity goals, which improves heart health and reduces prolonged desk time.

**Boosted mental wellbeing:** walking outdoors reduces stress and anxiety, boosts mood, and improves focus and concentration.

**Enhanced creativity:** movement stimulates cognitive function, which can help spark new ideas and support problem solving.

**Improved engagement:** a change of scenery can make conversations feel more relaxed and open, helping colleagues share ideas and communicate more easily.

**Increased sustainability:** walking meetings reduce the need for formal meeting rooms and electronic devices.

## When does a walking meeting work best?

Walking meetings are generally informal. They are suitable for small group brainstorming sessions, check-ins and one-on-one discussions.

They are most effective when they are close to your workplace and you have enough time to walk at a relaxed pace.

They may not be ideal if there are many attendees, require substantial note-taking, visual presentations, or access to specific equipment. They are also not advised when the content of the meeting is confidential.

# Planning a walking meeting

## **Step 1: assess suitability**

Decide if a walking meeting is appropriate for the type of meeting you are hosting, the number of participants and the ability of those joining.

## **Step 2: choose the route**

Plan a safe and accessible route close to your workplace. Make sure it works for everyone taking part.

## **Step 3: schedule the meeting**

Send a calendar invite with the start point, route and duration. Include a backup plan for poor weather. Factor time around the walking meeting so people can get ready, and are back at their desk in time, and can rest or freshen up.

## **Step 4: plan for accessibility**

Plan your route according to the needs and comfort of your colleagues, including those with disabilities. Consider the length of route, meeting duration, pace of the walk, rest stops, and the weather forecast.

## **Step 5: set an agenda**

Share an agenda in advance so colleagues can reflect and come prepared. Keep it simple and focussed.

## **Step 6: prepare your colleagues**

Let people know what to expect. This could include suitable clothing and any risks, such as road crossings or uneven ground.

## **Step 7: have fun!**

Enjoy the time and space to chat, explore and create whilst on the move.



## Hosting a successful walking meeting

**Limit group size:** smaller groups (2 to 5 people) work best for clear communication and staying safe.

**Keep it simple:** avoid complex agendas that require reference materials or substantial, formal note taking.

**Start with an introduction:** clearly state the purpose of the meeting and the expected outcomes. You may wish to outline the chosen route too.

**Be weather-aware:** have a contingency plan in case of poor weather.

**Set the pace:** walk and wheel at a comfortable pace that allows those taking part to enjoy easy conversation, without over-exertion.

**Encourage participation:** prompt quieter colleagues to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the group.

**Time management:** be mindful of the time and ensure key points are addressed within the time scheduled for the walking meeting.

**End with recap and next steps:** summarise key take-aways, assign follow-up actions and arrange follow-up discussions if necessary.

**Avoid over-scheduling:** factor time around the walking meeting so people are back at their desk in time, and can rest or freshen up.

## Overcoming challenges

You may come across some challenges when running walking meetings. Here are some common issues and how to address them.

### Low participation

Some colleagues may feel unsure about taking part.

- highlight the physical, mental and social benefits
- start with a small pilot group
- ask for feedback and make improvements.

### Accessibility

Colleagues will have different abilities.

- choose routes that are inclusive and accessible
- consider surface type, width, gradients and rest stops
- check for obstacles, lighting and visibility.

### Low engagement

Some meetings may feel unfocused.

- start with short, simple routes near your workplace, and gradually introduce longer or new routes
- include breaks for rest, hydration or quick notes
- vary your routes to keep things interesting
- choose quieter routes to support conversation and focus.

## Note taking

It can be harder to make a note of key points while on the move.

- bring a small notebook or use your phone
- take short breaks to note key points
- use voice recording apps if helpful.

## Weather

Poor weather can disrupt plans (and in Scotland it's always worth being prepared!).

- check the forecast in advance
- plan an indoor or alternative route
- reschedule if needed.



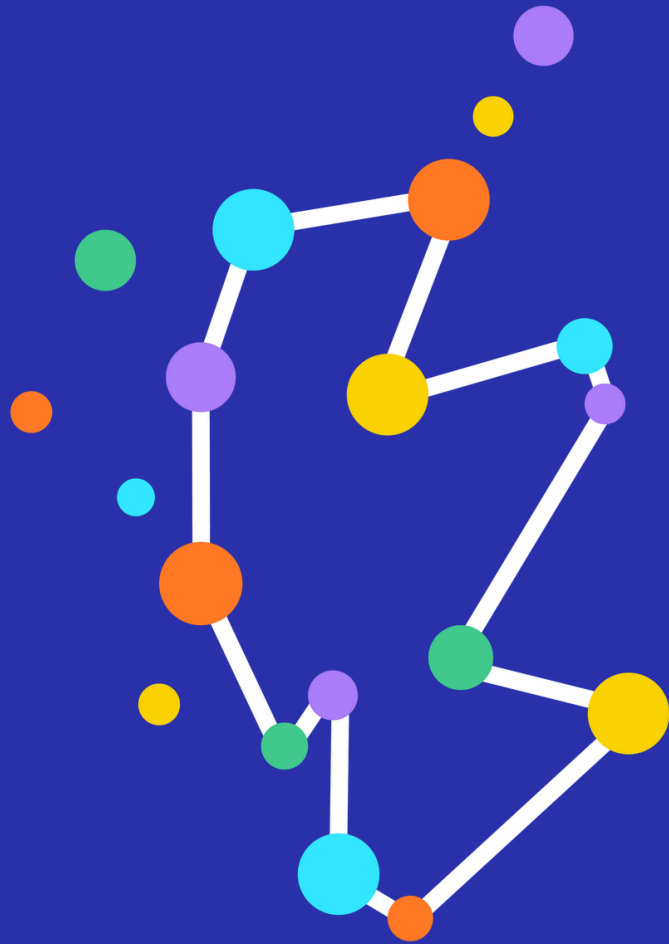


## Final thoughts

We hope you have found this introduction to walking meetings useful.

Walking meetings are a simple and effective way to boost health and wellbeing in the workplace. They encourage collaboration, strengthen working relationships and boost productivity. They can also encourage open, creative conversations, increase morale, focus and mood, and create a positive workplace culture of physical activity.

By using the ideas in this guide, you can make walking meetings part of your everyday routine. Start seeing the benefits for you, your team and your organisation.





# Walking Scotland

Your national walking and wheeling charity

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