

Safety on Group Walks Project

Volunteer Feedback

In November 2023, we shared our draft walk leader guidance with volunteers for feedback. And we received a fantastic response, with over 900 comments submitted. Thank you to everyone who took the time to review the guidance and send in their comments.

To help provide an overview of the feedback we received, and the changes we're looking to make in response to it, we've pulled together some key themes from your comments which we've highlighted below.

Please note, the feedback form is now closed.

Content, tone and volume

Lots of you highlighted that having all the information for walk leaders in one place is exactly what is needed and will be helpful for new walk leaders. Some even said that they had expected something like this when they first joined as a walk leader.

However, the feedback also indicated that the current document is too long, repetitive and has a patronising tone. Similarly, the feedback showed that while there is some great content, it's not relevant to the majority of Ramblers walks which are leisurely and moderate.

Based on this feedback, we will be making the document shorter, removing jargon, keeping it clear and championing the good practice we already do. We will also be producing an accompanying pocket-sized version of the guidance document.

Ratios

Volunteer feedback showed that the ratios were confusing and raised questions on when the walk leader and back marker may or may not be covered by the insurance.

We will be clarifying the ratios in the final guidance and using case studies to show how they may work in practice. We will also provide updated FAQs to accompany the final guidance document which will clarify the insurance questions.

Walk leader and walker responsibility

Feedback from our volunteers indicated that the draft guidance document feels like it is putting more responsibility on the walk leader and does not highlight the walker's responsibility.



We will be re-emphasizing the walker's responsibility and how groups can support their walk leaders in ensuring walkers are properly informed ahead of the walk. We will also be making it clear that the guidance is based on the existing good practice of our groups.

First aid

Feedback indicated confusion over the first aid requirements of each walk grading and whether a walk leader has to be first aid qualified.

We will be clarifying the first aid requirements of each walk grading in the final document.

Knowing who is walking

Volunteers also highlighted concerns over having to know who is walking when groups don't currently use booking systems or take registers. Feedback also indicated concern over managing GDPR when asking walkers for their information, with a feeling that it's the walker's responsibility to share any relevant information with the walk leader.

We will clarify what information is necessary and what is nice to have, and how groups can support their walk leaders to achieve this.

Next steps

Alongside the above, your feedback also showed us there are ways we can improve the format and design of the document. We will ensure we address this, and any other outstanding questions, in the guidance and supporting materials.

If you are a new walk leader, or have missed our earlier updates, you can find out more about this on Assemble in the Document Hub, in the Group Walks, Safety on Group Walks Project folder.