

**Welcome to our Life newsletter.**

Urbanwalks brings you news and information on the walking & physical activity projects and initiatives that the company are involved with, and to look at the inactivity and health issues in Britain today.

FEBRUARY 2008

newsletter **life**

# Tackling inactivity, through walking!

In 2004 the **Choosing Health 'making healthy choices easier'** white paper stated that the majority of the population was not physically active enough to benefit their health, and obesity was on the increase, so targets were set for this to be changed.

The white paper also reported that rates of walking have fallen drastically over the last 25 years. Increasing the levels of walking in the UK is important as walking has the potential more than any other physical activity to make a positive change to the health of our nation.

Following on from the white paper a number of papers and guidance notes have been written by various organisations,

**2003** Scottish Government launched 'Lets make Scotland more active' a strategy for physical activity.

**2004** Department for Transport (DFT) published 'Walking and Cycling: an action plan'.

**2005** Department of Health (DH) launched 'At least five a week' report.

**2005** Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) published 'Climbing higher - a strategy for sport and physical activity' document.

**2006** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) launched their 'Obesity guidance'.

**2007** WAG - Integrated Transport Unit launched their 'Smarter choices: Wales' booklet.



who all promote the importance of encouraging walking as a simple way of getting the nation more active, more often.

### Why Walking?

**70% of the population in the UK is inactive. 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 10 children are obese.**

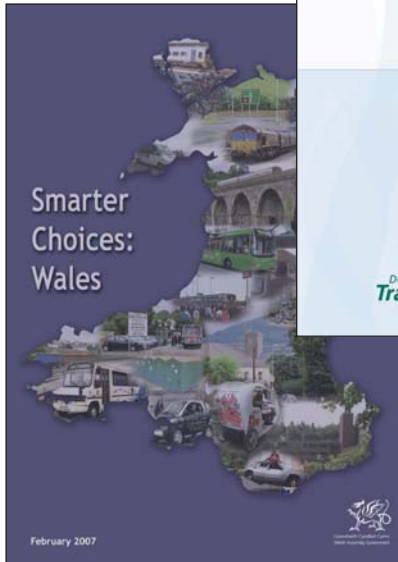
Walking is the one activity that most of the population can do. It's free of charge, no expensive equipment is needed and it can be done on your own or with friends and family. Moderate exercise such as walking is known to reduce the risks of heart disease, stroke, obesity, type II diabetes, osteoporosis, some cancers and hypertension; it also promotes all round health and well being.

It is worthwhile stating that walking is not just a health agenda but crosses many policy domains such as transport, environment, sport, regeneration, education and town planning for example, which provides great opportunities for partnership working across all sectors as everyone now has a role and responsibility to improve activity levels across the nation and tackle inactivity.

Over the last 10 years a number of government funded organisations have been set up with the aim of increasing the physical activity levels of the nation through walking, whilst providing best and good practice.

**GOOD PRACTICE IN WALKING PROMOTION**

In 2004 Urbanwalks was launched. Urbanwalks has over 18 years of experience working in the health and physical activity field and aims to increase the physical activity levels of the general public across the United Kingdom through walking by offering tailor-made walking routes. The urban walking routes can be aimed at any population group and work independently or alongside any existing walking programme or initiative e.g. health walks, active travel plans or walking to school schemes.



The main difference between Urbanwalks and many of the other walking organisations or projects, is that Urbanwalks focus is on independent short walks in the everyday environment not led, countryside or historical walks, as these are already available. Urbanwalks provides people with the opportunity to easily achieve their 5 x 30 minutes of physical activity a week.

Urbanwalks defines the word urban to where somebody lives or works, which means urban walking routes can include city and town centres, rural villages, green space and urban parks, schools or industrial parks for example. To date Urbanwalks have mapped, measured, risk assessed and designed **over 400 individual independent walking routes across the UK & Northern Ireland and distributed over 500,000 leaflets.** We have produced

urban walks for a number of different organisations for community projects, health at work schemes or active travel plans, please visit our website [www.urbanwalks.co.uk](http://www.urbanwalks.co.uk) and click on company info to find our client list.

Although Urbanwalks is a small private company and not a government funded initiative we have been recognised as good practice in walking promotion in two government documents, the **Department for Transport's 'Walking and Cycling: an action plan'**, page 47 and the **Welsh Assembly Government - Integrated Transport Unit's 'Smarter choices: Wales'** booklet, page 39.



Urbanwalks have been designing tailor-made urban walking routes for four years now and aims to carry on developing the company and continue to be the biggest producer of independent urban walking routes in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

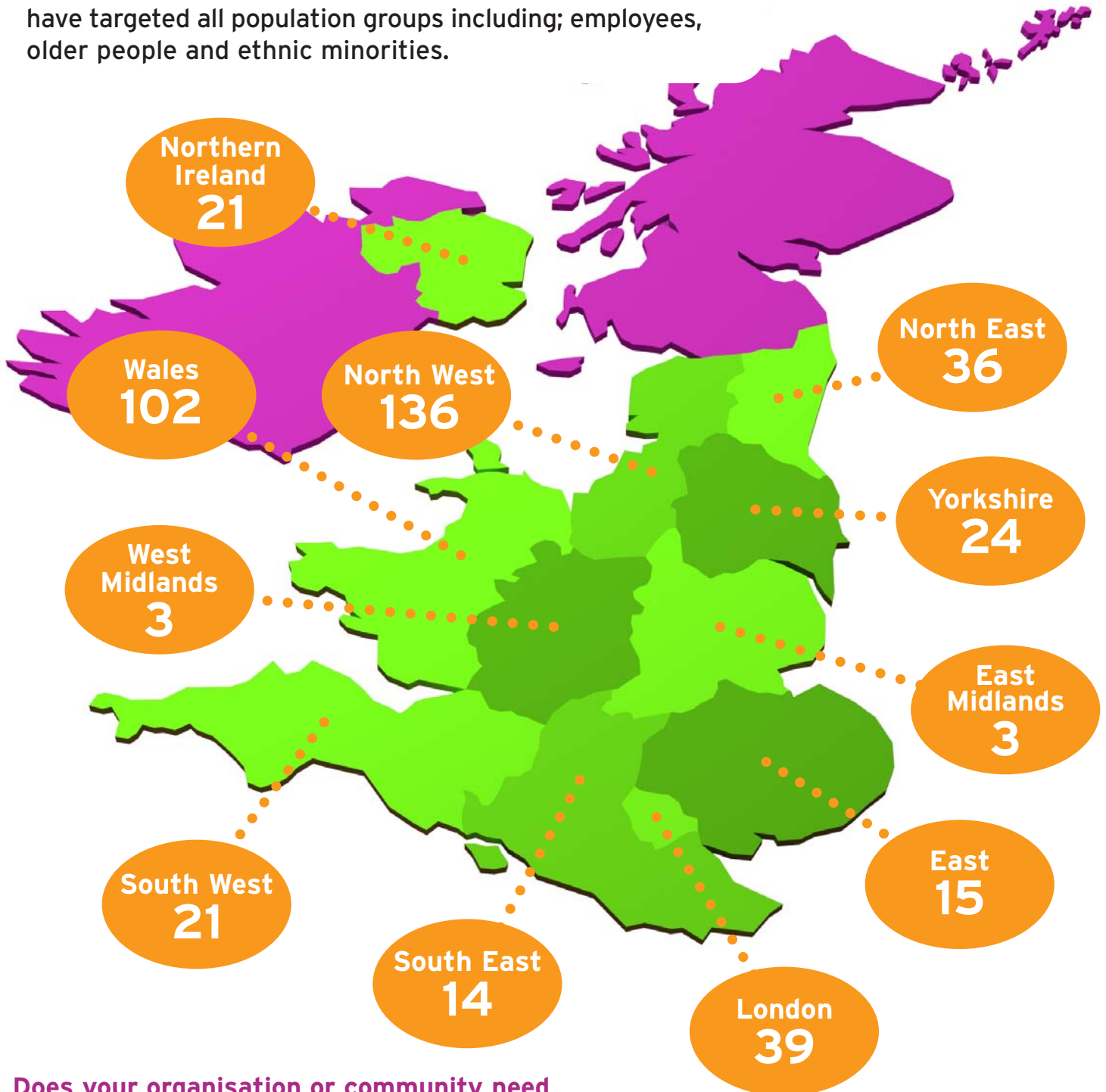


If you would like to make a mark on the map and provide urban walks for your community or workplace then contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

# Urban walking routes around the UK

## 414 Independent Walking Routes and Counting!

Since 2004 Urbanwalks have designed and produced 414 Independent tailor made walking routes. These walking routes have been designed for Urban, Rural, Green Space and Active Travel projects and have targeted all population groups including; employees, older people and ethnic minorities.



Does your organisation or community need putting on the map? If so, contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507** and start making a difference!

# Helena Housing goes urban walking in St Helens

Urbanwalks was commissioned by Halton and St Helens PCT last September to produce a six urban walks booklet for Helena Housing's residents in Billinge and Blackbrook in St Helens, with a view to the booklet also being available to the general public.

The aim of Urbanwalks is to get more people, more active, more often through walking and provide opportunities for anyone to achieve their 5 x 30 minutes of physical activity a week as set out in the Chief Medical Officers Report 2004.

With these urban walking routes being specifically designed with older people in mind, it was decided that the routes would be displayed in a booklet format instead of our original tri-fold leaflet. For the first time Urbanwalks designed the routes with a bigger font size text to make it easier to read. With the text being bigger it was important that the routes were not too complicated and long so that all the directions could stay on the same page as the simplistic map. It was also important for Urbanwalks to take into consideration the population group that the booklet was aimed at in regards to the difficulty and distance of the routes.

We are all aware that as we get older our walking speed can reduce and walking may even become difficult due to medial conditions. However, walking is a great way of staying physically active as we get older. Walking can promote independence by maintaining good muscular strength and flexibility in the lower limbs and can maintain or improve cardiac fitness.

Before any routes were mapped out and measured

Justine Dingwall, Managing Director for Urbanwalks met up with some residents from Helena Housing in Billinge, who gave Justine some background information on their activity levels and where they would and would not normally go walking. Three ladies all over the age of 80 joined Justine for the mapping and measuring

of some of the routes in Billinge, which was extremely valuable to Urbanwalks with regards to the timings of the routes, choosing routes that did not have any steep inclines and in areas that the residents would feel safe.

All walking routes in an urban walks leaflet or booklet are given distances with an approximate time in which the route should be achieved. This is worked out on a national average brisk walking speed of 3.5 mph. When Urbanwalks mapped, measured, risk assessed and designed the urban walking routes for Billinge and Blackbrook we took into consideration that a one mile walk, which should normally take around 15 - 20 minutes may take some older people 25 - 30 minutes, so we made sure that there

were no routes longer than one and a half miles, which would take the older age group around 30 - 40 minutes. Halton and St Helens PCT will be doing an official launch of the leaflets in April this year.



For more information about this project please contact Hannah Jones, Physical Activity Health Improvement Specialist for Halton & St Helens PCT on **01744 697 432** or Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

# Strabane walk active booklet translated into Irish Gaelic

We reported in the July 2007 edition of our Life Newsletter about a three booklet project we delivered for Derry Healthy Cities as part of a project called Walk Active, Bike Active.

Urbanwalks produced a six walk active booklet for Strabane District Council and Limavady Borough Council and a nine walk active booklet for Derry City. All the booklets were in English, which was agreed by the Director of Derry Healthy Cities, Eamon O’Kane.



walks had been very well received and a large number of the local community members had contacted Strabane District Council asking if an Irish Gaelic version was available.

Urbanwalks have produced bilingual urban walks booklets before across Wales and was more than happy to produce an Irish Gaelic version for Strabane. The booklet was translated and printed as a separate booklet to the English version, so they could be distributed independently.

For more information about producing bilingual walking booklets please contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

The Walk Active, Bike Active initiative was launched in July 2007 with 60,000 booklets being printed and distributed through a number of different projects across the three areas. In September 2007 Aiden Lynch, Sports Development Officer for Strabane District Council contacted Urbanwalks asking if it would be possible to produce their walk active booklet into Irish Gaelic as the promotion of the

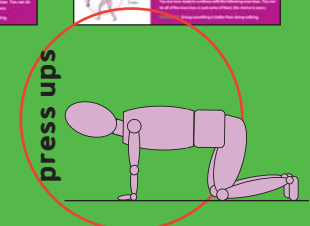
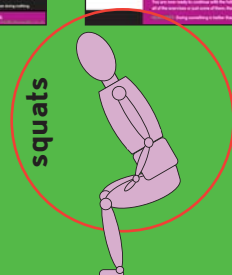
## Practical activity solutions for home or work...

### Home & Office-based Exercise Sheets

The Urbanwalks exercise sheets are for home and office use and have been designed to give a whole or part body workout through a range of practical exercises.

The exercises have been designed so that there is something for everyone, including older people, the young or inactive, and those people who suffer from medical conditions such as: high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, heart attack or stroke and obesity.

We have 10 exercise sheets in total and they are all available to browse and buy off our website: [www.urbanwalks.co.uk](http://www.urbanwalks.co.uk) or call us on **0870 242 7507** for more information.



# Practical solutions for inactivity...

## Urbanwalks Activity & Exercise Consultancy Service

Urbanwalks are able to offer a wide range of consultancy services. Urbanwalks have over 18 years experience of working within both the public and private sector with extensive knowledge in project management, partnership building and implementing change within the health and physical activity field.

Urbanwalks can also help you develop frameworks to implement a physical activity policy within your work force or community; provide support in reinforcing your message through launch days, promotional events, or one-to-one consultations as well as providing physical activity programmes and solutions.

## Urbanwalks Six Urban Walks Leaflet

The Six Urban Walks leaflet has been specifically designed to fill the gap in promoting local urban walks using a generic template. Each leaflet provides a variety of circular routes of differing length within the local everyday environment for both employees or local communities. The walks are mapped out and displayed on a professionally designed and practical fold-down leaflet or as an intranet based PDF. A bilingual booklet format is also available.

## Urbanwalks Three Urban Walks Leaflet

This shortened version has been designed for individual companies and the 1 or 2 day conference or exhibition market. Three local walks are mapped out and displayed in a leaflet as above or as a PDF file to be accessed via the client's intranet. The routes have been designed to get employees or conference delegates re-energised and refreshed by taking a short walk.

## Urbanwalks Active Travel Walks

The active travel walks have been designed to encourage employees to use walking as a mode of transport or to build in walking as part of their journey to and from work. These routes can be produced in a leaflet format or as a PDF, we also design single active travel routes for conferences in a PDF format, which aims at encouraging delegates to use public transport and the active travel route to and from the conference.

## Urbanwalks Activity Motivator

The aim of the Activity Motivator is to be available for one-to-one consultations to the employees of an organisation as part of their health at work campaign, this could be once a month or 2-3 times a year. During the consultation employees can ask the Activity Motivator any questions they may have about health, diet or fitness. The Activity Motivator will then prescribe a tailor-made programme of activity for them to follow, whether that's during their lunch break, at their local gym or at home. There are no fitness tests or exercises undertaken during this consultation.

The Activity Motivator is a fully qualified fitness specialist with over 18 years experience of working with people of all fitness levels from the already fit and healthy to those with medical conditions such as: Hypertension, Arthritis, Angina, Post MI and Obesity.

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For more information about our products, activity solutions and consultancy services, please call us on **0870 242 7507** or visit us at

**[www.urbanwalks.co.uk](http://www.urbanwalks.co.uk)**

