


ACTIVE FOR LIFE

Suffolk Walking Strategy



2015-2020



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Foreword

The case for people in Suffolk to walk more is clear. In Suffolk, most of us could improve our health through more physical activity. Most of us can walk yet nearly half of us are inactive to the extent that it is harming our health and wellbeing.

Walking is a free and environmentally friendly with significant health and social benefits. It is simple, inclusive, accessible, pleasant and safe. It is an efficient and effective way to get from A to B and a great way of reducing sedentary time. It is easy to build in to a busy lifestyle and you can generally do it anywhere.

We need to reverse the trend of walking less. There was a 10% fall in walking in England between 2003 and 2012. In Suffolk 42% of us meet healthy levels of physical activity, with 33.5% of 10 -11 year olds and 62% of adults being unhealthily overweight.

This level of inactivity has a knock on effect on our physical and mental health, our wellbeing, our economy, our environment and our educational attainment. It is a stark reality that the healthcare costs alone of physical inactivity in Suffolk are estimated to exceed £14million per year.

Suffolk's Health & Wellbeing Board recognises the challenge of encouraging more people to be active for life and welcomes this strategy, which provides a framework for the development of walking in the county. It is the work of a committed and enthusiastic group of partners, organisations and individuals from across Suffolk who deserve recognition and thanks for their hard work in bringing the strategy to fruition and their ongoing commitment to its delivery.

Without doubt Suffolk is a beautiful county. Our natural environment makes it a wonderful place to walk in, both in urban and rural areas. Our landscape, rights of way, footpaths, coastal path, circular walks, long distance routes, organised walks, green spaces and parks combine to make Suffolk a walking friendly county.

We call on all agencies, organisations and individuals in Suffolk to consider what they can do to get all of us who are able, up on our feet and walking more. Whether you're a community group, an employer, a statutory agency or a school or whether you're involved in planning, transport, education, the media or health, you all have a part to play.

Together we can make a real difference to our health, our happiness and our environment. Join us and help secure some of the many benefits to be gained from more people walking more often!



Tessa Lindfield
Director of Public
Health
Suffolk County
Council



Cllr Alan Murray
Chairman
Suffolk Health and
Wellbeing Board

Our Vision

Our vision is for people in Suffolk to walk more often.

Aims of the Strategy:

- Walking is seen as beneficial, easy, inclusive, accessible, pleasant and safe;
- Walking is the 'default' choice for journeys of 20 minutes walking time or less

More people walking more often will improve the physical and mental health of the people of Suffolk and make a significant contribution towards Suffolk's ambition of being the most active county in England.

Walking in Suffolk

Of the 730,000 people who live in Suffolk, approximately one third live in the three main towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, a third in market towns and a third within rural areas. An increasing proportion of the population is elderly. Between 2008 and 2031 those aged 65 years and over in Suffolk are projected to increase from 19.2% of the population to 25.9%. The following diagram provides an illustration of the scope and diversity of activity currently taking place in the county. This strategy then aims to build on the good work undertaken across Suffolk by many individuals, organisations and agencies.



Current Picture of Walking in Suffolk

Of the 730,000 people who live in Suffolk, approximately one third lives in the three main towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft, a third in the market towns and a third within the rural areas. An increasing proportion of the population is elderly. Between 2008 and 2031 those aged 65 years and over in Suffolk are projected to increase from 19.2% of the population to 25.9%: an increase of over 85,000 people aged 65 years and over. This strategy then builds on the good work undertaken across Suffolk by many individuals, organisations and agencies. The following diagram provides an illustration of the scope and diversity of activity currently taking place in the county:



What Works to Increase Daily Walking?

Evidence from previous physical activity interventions shows us that there are 7 'best buys' for such an intervention. It is important that we adhere to these principles of what works best when implementing any new initiatives. These are described by the British Journal of Sports Medicine (2012) as:

- 'Whole-of-school' programs;
- Transport policies and systems that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport;
- Urban design regulations and infrastructure that provides for equitable and safe access for recreational physical activity, and recreational and transport-related walking and cycling across the life course;
- Physical activity and NCD (Non communicable disease) prevention integrated into primary health care systems;
- Public education, including mass media to raise awareness and change social norms on physical activity;
- Community-wide programs involving multiple settings and sectors and that mobilise and integrate community engagement and resources;
- Sports systems and programs that promote 'sport for all' and encourage participation across the life span.

It is also important that we capitalise on life events; making all interventions as timely as possible to create the biggest impact on the individual in terms of lasting behaviour change.ⁱ

Why Walk?

Inactive Suffolk

According to the Department for Transport, 22.3% of Suffolk residents do not walk for 10 minutes more than once a week and only 42.1% of Suffolk's population is walking for 10 minutes or more 5 x per week.

Patients who are inactive have been found to spend 38% more days in hospital, have 5.5% more GP visits and 12% more nurse visitsⁱⁱ, therefore the UK Chief Medical Officer recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity. The recommendation for children (5-18) is at least 60 minutes every day and preferably more. It is self-reported that 1 in 3 adults in the UK are not doing enough physical activity to meet these guidelines - with the actual figure expected to be substantially more. People with disabilities may experience more difficulty with walking but this group is half as likely to be physically active as those with no disabilityⁱⁱⁱ. The guidelines also highlight the need to reduce time spent being sedentary for all age groups. For most people, walking will be one of the easiest and most achievable ways to reduce sedentary behaviour.

Walking (2012/3)

Measure: The proportion of residents who walk (for at least 10 minutes continuously, irrespective of purpose) a given number of times per week/month. Source: Department for Transport, published 29 April 2014, next update Spring 2015.

Area	1 x per month	1 x per week	3 x per week	5 x per week
Suffolk	87.5%	77.7%	53.2%	42.1%
East of England	86.4%	76.5%	53.3%	42.1%
England	86.3%	77.3%	54.7%	43.7%

Note: Previous years' surveys asked about walking for at least 5 minutes. Therefore, the results in this table are not directly comparable with those from previous years.

Walking - The Gateway to Activity

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Walking one mile will take just 15 minutes if walking at 4mph. It is underrated as a form of exercise but walking is ideal for people of all ages and fitness levels who want to be more active. Regular walking has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, respiratory diseases, stroke and some cancers – all of which are key causes of early death in Suffolk. Walking can also be a great way of reducing social isolation and improving mental health, and is often a gateway activity into organised sport and other physical activities.

The Health Burden of Inactivity in Suffolk

Suffolk County			
	Number	Number reduced if 100% population becomes active	Cost of inactivity
Early deaths	2747	490	
Diabetes (prevalence)	30,789	4,130	2,620,537
CHD (Emergency admissions)	1,495	165	£7,602,303
Breast Cancer (New Cases)	487	99	£854,605
Bowel Cancer	402	80	£1,085,154
Stroke			£1,884,081
Cost (total for Suffolk for 1 yr)			£14,046,686
Cost (per 100,00)			£1,894,165

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Benefits of Walking

Along with the 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week recommended for adults by the Chief Medical Officer, it is recommended that you should do muscle strengthening activity on at least 2 days per week, and avoid being sedentary for periods of longer than 4 hours. Integrating walking into the daily routine is a great way to meet these recommendations, with walking being the easiest way to do this.

Health and Wellbeing

The benefits from a Health and Wellbeing perspective include:

- Reduced risk of Heart Disease, obesity, type 2 Diabetes, dementia, depression and cancers, currently costing the NHS £85million per year^{iv}
- Reduced road traffic casualties, currently costing £3.4 billion per year^v
- Reduced vehicle emissions = improved air quality
- Fewer visits to hospitals
- Increased social interaction and decreased isolation^{vi}
- Improved mental health
- Increased take up of organised sports and other physical activities

Transport and Infrastructure

The benefits to transport and infrastructure include:

- Increased use of public transport as an element of active travel^{vii}
- Reduced traffic congestion^{viii}
- Reduced carbon emissions and air pollution, currently responsible for 100,000 deaths per year within the EU^{ix}
- Reduced transport costs to Suffolk County Council for travel to educational and medical locations
- Increased use of rural public rights of way and natural green spaces or parks^x

Economy and Skills

From an economic perspective, walking:

- Increases the flow of pedestrian traffic through high streets and villages to local businesses, and increases the frequency of shopping trips resulting in an increase in sales^{xi}
- Leads to a reduction in the cost of traffic congestion^{xii}
- Creates a more pleasant local environment, beneficial for tourism opportunities, bringing tourist spend into the county^{xiii}
- Creates a healthier and more productive workforce^{xiv}
- Reduces the financial burden on the NHS^{xv}
- Leads to improved educational attainment^{xvi}

Actions and Outcomes

The aims of this strategy are that:

- Walking is seen as beneficial, easy, inclusive, accessible, pleasant and safe;
- Walking is the 'default' choice for journeys of 20 minutes walking time or less

Aims	How we will achieve these aims
To increase daily physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and consider opportunities and implement actions that make walking easier • Improve information about walking options and walking routes • Encourage organisational buy in to policies on improving infrastructure that supports walking • Encourage all schools to actively monitor, review and develop high quality school travel plans • Develop incentives with partners to encourage walking to work • Influence educational settings and work places about the value of walking
To promote walking to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness with and encourage GPs and health professionals to engage with the strategy • Establish a virtual resource to promote walking • Support and promote the Suffolk Walking Festival as an annual celebration of walking in Suffolk • Explore innovative technology based initiatives that have the potential to increase walking • Secure a media partner for walking promotion in Suffolk and develop a communications strategy
To address inequalities, particularly encouraging those who are inactive to become active, ensuring that we give additional support to those who need it most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target and work with specific groups that we know are less likely to be physically active to encourage walking • Continually highlight the accessibility of Suffolk, promoting the various benefits of walking on individuals and communities. • Develop focus groups to ensure that we are meeting the needs to those who require additional support to walk more • Work with representative bodies and existing event organisers to promote walking to specific groups who are less likely to be physically active
To create a strategic context that will support all organisations across Suffolk to apply for funding for the development of walking opportunities and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a senior member of the Public Health team is responsible for promoting and developing walking^{xvii} • Ensure the joint strategic needs assessment, the joint health and wellbeing strategy and other local needs assessments and strategies take into account opportunities to increase walking • Provide the evidence and strategic justification to enable organisations across Suffolk to make the case to funding agencies and grant giving bodies for investment in walking in the county. • Host an annual walking stakeholder event to showcase good practice and promote collaboration in growing and sustaining walking participation in Suffolk

Outcomes

We hope that these actions will create a strategy that inspires and emphasises community action and responsibility.

We want this strategy to result in better evidence for planners to justify walking-friendly infrastructure and for those planning decisions on walking to take account of people's needs.

We want more workplaces and organisations to prioritise walking, and for people to be walking more, particularly for active transport.

This strategy aims to result in a more coordinated approach to walking; more resources to promote walking; strategic support and improved awareness of walking and continuation of improvements made to the accessibility of Suffolk, resulting in a greater voice for walking in Suffolk.



Governance of the Strategy

The Walking Strategy has been prepared by a representative group of agencies and organisations at the request of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board. The Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for supporting the integrated working of health, care, and other public services, with the aim of improving wellbeing outcomes for Suffolk. The Board was established in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The governance of the strategy is as follows:

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board

Purpose – to agree the strategic direction of the strategy and monitor progress against the targets within the action plan

Health and Wellbeing Board Programme Office

Most Active County Advisory Group

Purpose – to provide practical guidance and support for the work of the Walking Strategy Group

Focus Groups

Purpose – To ensure that needs of groups who require additional support are met by the Strategy

Walking Strategy Group Chair – Director of Public Health

Purpose – to be responsible for the day to day implementation and delivery of the walking action plan

Local authorities, walking groups, partner organisations, other stakeholders

Walking Development Network

Purpose – To motivate partners to further co-operate in designing, promoting and commissioning walking opportunities in Suffolk

i NICE (2007)
ii Bird, Dr W (2011)
iii Public Health England (2014b)
iv Davis A (2014)
v RPS (2011)

vi Public Health England (2014b)
vii DfT (2011a)
viii DfT and DH (2011b)
ix RPS (2011)
x Heron C and Bradshaw G (2010)

xi Clifton et al (2012)
xii Davis (2014)
xiii Davis (2014)
xiv Public Health England (2014b)
xv Public Health England (2014b)

xvi Davis (2014)
xvii NICE (2012)

Delivery

This strategy details a series of overarching aims across a number of areas collectively targeted at helping more Suffolk people walk more often. Delivery of these actions will only be achieved through individuals and organisations taking responsibility and working collaboratively. We call on all organisations to:

1. Prioritise walking;
2. Commit, at all levels, to support the implementation of the strategy;
3. Embrace the actions within the strategy;
4. Identify what actions they can take to support the strategy;
5. Measure progress in achieving the outcomes of the strategy.

The next step is to develop a detailed plan showing how, when, where and by whom each action will be implemented, along with costs.

Measurement

We recognise that if we are to effect real and lasting change through this strategy we need to take a long-term, evidence-based approach, building upon what we know works.

With this in mind we will monitor progress and measure impact of the Suffolk Walking Strategy via the DfT local area walking statistics which are published annually. The DfT provides figures on the proportion of adults participating in walking by area of residence, with additional information on frequency, duration, and purpose. Walking statistics and definitions can be found here: <http://tiny.cc/fkgbwx>

Where possible we will also measure impact at an organisational, programme and individual level. This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.



Potential Funding Sources

In order to achieve the aims set out in this strategy, we have identified a range of potential funding sources. Funding opportunities will continue to be sought by the working group.

- AONB funding
www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/grants-and-funding/sustainable-development-fund/
and www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/grants-and-funding/
- Big Lottery Fund - Awards for All
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/awards-for-allengland
- Big Lottery Fund- Reaching Communities
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities
- Brecks – Breaking New Ground
www.brecks.org/assets/pdf-guides/BNG-grant-guidelines-2014.pdf
- Department of Health
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-of-health
- East of England Cooperative - Community Fund
www.eastofengland.coop/members-community/could-we-help-support-you
- EU Funding - EU Funding Programmes: 2 Seas / Life+ Balance/Interreg/Cross Channel
fundingenquiries@suffolk.gov.uk
- Heart Research UK
<http://heartresearch.org.uk/grants/healthy-heart-grants>
- Henry Smith Charity
www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk
- Heritage Lottery Fund
www.hlf.org.uk/our-projects
- John Ellerman Foundation
www.ellerman.org.uk
- Peoples Health Trust (Health Lottery)
www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/apply-for-funding/active-communities
- Rayne Foundation - Rayne Grants
www.raynefoundation.org.uk
- Suffolk Community Foundation - Get Suffolk Moving Fund
<http://suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/get-suffolk-moving-fund/>

Concluding remarks

This strategy sets out the reasons for walking, the benefits of walking and some of the many opportunities to walk in Suffolk, whether for transport, recreation or health. It details a range of aims across a number of priority areas and a governance structure to lead an increase in walking in the county. It also identifies a range of potential sources of funding to support walking development.

By working collaboratively we can realise our ambition of more Suffolk people walking more often and, in doing so, secure significant health, social, economic and environmental benefits.

Further information

For further information about this strategy, please email Alexandra Blowers, Public Health Suffolk, Alexandra.blowers@suffolk.gov.uk



Glossary

Active transport: An approach to travel and transport that focuses on physical activity (walking and cycling) as opposed to motorised means.

Air pollution: The introduction of chemicals, particulate matter or biological materials into the atmosphere.

Asthma: Long term condition affecting the airways causing coughing, wheezing, tightness of the chest and breathlessness.

Carbon emissions: The release of carbon into the atmosphere.

Chronic illness: A condition or disease that is persistent or long-lasting in its effects.

Dementia: Progressive decline in multiple areas of the brain including decline in memory, reasoning, communication skills and the ability to carry out daily activities.

Diabetes: A life-long condition where the amount of glucose in the blood is too high for the body to use properly.

Health and Social Care Act 2012: An act of parliament establishing the development of Health and Wellbeing Boards

Health and Wellbeing: Degree of physical, mental and social comfort.

Health and Wellbeing Board/strategy: Set up in every upper tier local authority to improve health and care services and the health and wellbeing of local people. The Board brings together key commissioners to assess the needs of the local population through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, to produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy to inform the commissioning of health, social care and public health services and to promote greater integration across health and social care.

<http://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/>

Health Inequalities: Differences in degree of

health or in the health determinants between different populations/ community groups that may be seen as preventable.

Heart disease: Develops when the arteries supplying blood to the heart become partially or wholly blocked. This causes symptoms of chest pain which is temporary and treatable. Heart disease can result in a heart attack if the blood supply to the heart is stopped for long enough to cause damage

Intervention: Additional, timely and effective support for those who need it – enabling people to make change and preventing costly, harmful long-term consequences. Most Active County: Most Active County aims to provide “a framework for partners in Suffolk to work together to create, promote and commission sport and physical activity opportunities that promote healthy, active lifestyles, shift inactive behaviours and address the barriers that communities or individuals face in accessing sport, leisure and physical activity.”
www.mostactivecounty.com

Non-Communicable Diseases: Chronic diseases that cannot be passed from person to person.

Obesity: BMI of 30 or above

The Ramblers: Registered charity concerned with the protection and expansion of places and infrastructure for walking.

www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-do/ourmission.aspx

Respiratory Diseases: Condition that affects the airways including the nasal passages, bronchi and lungs.

Rights of Way (RoW): Access routes allowing walkers, cyclists, horse riders and motorists the right to use some areas of land for walking and some leisure purposes. These access routes are marked with coloured arrows to determine who they are accessible to.

School Travel Plan: A needs assessment for accessing a school with practical guidance on how to reduce vehicle traffic and improve active travel engagement.

Sedentary behaviour: Any time a person is sitting or lying down, they are engaging in sedentary behaviour. Common sedentary behaviours include TV viewing, video game playing, computer use, driving automobiles, and reading.

Social isolation: The absence of social interactions, contacts, and relationships with family and friends, with neighbours on an individual level, and with 'society at large' on a broader level.

Stroke: Occurs when the blood supply to the brain is disturbed. If the supply of blood is restricted or stopped, brain cells begin to die. This can lead to brain damage and possibly death.

Suffolk Walking Festival:

Annual programme of guided walks in Suffolk
<http://suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk/>

Sustainable transport: All forms of transport which minimise emissions of carbon dioxide and pollutants. It can refer to public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling as well as technology such as electric and hybrid cars and biodiesel.



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