



**LONG DISTANCE**

**LDWA**

**WALKERS ASSOCIATION**

# **Social Walks & Covid-19**

## **Risk Assessment, Delivery Plan, Rules and Guidance**

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# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the LDWA's safe return to social walks plan across the UK:

- England for groups of more than six individuals (breaching the 'rule of 6) up to 30.
- Scotland for groups of more than of 15 individuals and/or groups from more than five households (who otherwise breach the limit on allowable group size there).
- Wales for groups of up to 30.

The Governments have allowed an exemption for larger groups provided certain conditions are met including through a risk assessment and delivery plan, careful organisation and robust oversight by the National Governing Body.

The LDWA adopts the following principles:

- Transparency and clear communication with social walk leaders and participants.
- Infection control managed by walk leaders and participants:
  - Risk assessment completed (where mandated in the rules and encouraged as best practice in other circumstances) and uploaded with the walks register to the LDWA website; and
  - Social distancing and robust hygiene measures are always in place.
- Consideration of the impact of social walks on communities and residents, especially those that are shielding or vulnerable.

In England the Government allows an exemption larger group sizes for 'organised outdoor activity' arranged by a National Governing Bodies such as the LDWA. The published guidance this is given in "guidance for the public on the phased return of outdoor-sport-and-recreation". This LDWA exemption is gained by meeting a number of requirements including an event risk assessment and delivery plan. These have to be documented and available for inspection (particularly if it were claimed that a LDWA walk breached the law).

In Scotland, the 'Phase 3: return to sport and physical activity' guidance published by Sport Scotland has been utilised.

Further Guidance provided by the Health and Safety Executive, Sport England, Sport Scotland, Sport Wales and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports has also been taken into consideration.

The LDWA is cognisant that walk leaders and walkers are best placed to drive continuous improvements to the risk assessment, rules and guidance through feedback and suggestions. Revisions will continue to take place to this document to reflect evolving

circumstances with specific reference to shielding changes or localised lockdowns, to enable the best Covid-19 secure experience possible.

Two appendices are also included within this document to further evidence the governance and meticulous planning that has already taken place by the LDWA:

- Social Walk Risk Assessment and Rules; and
- Leading Local Group Social Walks; Brief Guidelines for Social Walk Leaders.

## Background to the LDWA

The LDWA is an association of people with the common interest of walking long distances in rural, urban, mountainous or moorland areas. The LDWA allows like-minded long distance walkers to gain access to information on walking events and long distance routes across the UK. The LDWA comprises of 43 local groups across the UK who arrange social walks. The LDWA is recognised as the national governing body (NGB) for rambling by Sport England, Sport Scotland and Sport Wales.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is the governing body of the Long Distance Walkers Association.

## What is a Social Walk?

The LDWA, through its local groups, offers an extensive programme of local group social walks and it is part of the Association's ethos that any member can participate in walks advertised in Strider (a magazine produced three times a year for its members) or on national or group webpages.

Social walks aim to be interesting and enjoyable in themselves, but also they should also be at a sociable pace that enables participants to talk and get to know each other during the walk.

The LDWA and its local groups depend on members volunteering to lead group walks. One of the strengths of the Association is that many members are willing to lead, and we provide guidance for leaders.

## Social Walks – Understanding the Risk

At NEC level, the LDWA has made significant progress over the last four months in understanding the COVID-19 transmission risks that are inherent in social walks. The NEC is

cognisant of the guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and have based the risk assessment on its criteria.

The NEC understands the three key variables of COVID-19 and has agreed measures to ensure these are appropriately controlled.

## Droplet Transmission and Aerosol Generation

This is the risk associated with each action in an activity based on duration, number and proximity of participants.

Appendix I sets out the risk assessment and rules from the NEC for social walk organisers to ensure Covid-19 compliance. This is used in conjunction with existing guidelines (Appendix II). Appendix I supersedes any specific areas of increased Covid-19 transmission risk outlined in Appendix II.

This sets out:

- Very clear messaging around the importance of social distancing at all stages during the social walk.
- The importance of carrying out a 'recce' of the route in advance to ensure it is appropriate and that suitable adjustments can be made where practical in conjunction with narrow paths, to minimise any potential for conflict with members of the general public.
- The necessity for all participants to carry hand sanitiser and face covering.

## Fomite Transmission

This is the risk associated with the handling and transfer of equipment in the activity.

The NEC has proposed clear guidance to social walk organisers and participants to ensure:

- Participants do not share personal items or equipment during their social walk.
- Participants to regularly use hand sanitiser or wash their hands, as the route could include gates/stiles.
- Participants must bring and consume their own food and drinks.

## Population

This is the risk around the number of participants likely to take part in the proposed activity plus known risk factors or participants with underlying health conditions or high-risk groups.

The NEC is aware of the number and types of participants that are likely to attend social walks. To this end:

- Individuals are told not to attend if they or a member of their household has recently been diagnosed with or show any Covid-19 symptoms, are awaiting results or self-isolating.
- Individuals under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults are not permitted to join social walks unaccompanied.
- Individuals must make specific additional needs or vulnerabilities clear in advance of the social walk to ensure these needs can be accommodated by the leader in line with the LDWA's safeguarding policy.
- Records of social walk attendees are retained in line with the LDWA Data Retention Policy and to support any Track and Trace/Test and Protect activity that may arise.
- The NEC have proposed a reduction in the number of entrants on social walks to a maximum of **30** to ensure risk mitigation activities are sufficient.

## Social Walks – Assessing the Risk

Based on the type of activity outlined within the document and the Covid-19 transmission risks set out, the inherent risk of social walks is low due to the number of participants and the lack of shared equipment required to participate.

This inherent risk is further mitigated with restrictions to numbers of participants, clear rules and guidelines to walk leaders and participants. If the risk crystallises, contingency measures are in place to reduce the impact and help support any Track and Trace / Test and Protect activity to take place.

The use of walk registers to enable Track and Trace / Test and Protect for all social walks provide a clear process to inform the LDWA post event of any positive Covid-19 test. It also reassures members that their safety and wellbeing is the LDWA's primary objective.

## Communication Strategy

It is critical that a robust strategy is in place by the NEC to ensure this risk assessment, rules and associated guidance is effectively communicated to all local groups who wish to recommence arranging social walks. It is also critical that communications provide reassurance to members of the LDWA that the safety measures being implemented will enable local groups to deliver Covid-19 compliant social walks as well as a providing a positive and welcoming experience. To this end, the Communications and Marketing Officer and Local Groups Officer (both members of the NEC) are responsible for supporting the delivery of this to social walk organisers and members of local groups. This strategy will be implemented by:

- Virtual video conference calls with all local group officers to discuss the risk assessment, seek feedback and check understanding.
- Emails via the National Membership Database to ensure all relevant recipients receive a copy.
- The guidance will be covered, where appropriate, at face to face meetings with LDWA members e.g. the AGM.
- Chairman's newsletter communicated to a wider membership audience by email.
- Guidance published on the [www.ldwa.org.uk](http://www.ldwa.org.uk) website.
- Details of the guidance contained within the Strider magazine posted to all members.
- This guidance will also be available on request if members or social walk leaders would like a paper copy.
- Social Media sites will be utilised for bitesize messaging to reinforce the guidance.
- Contact details of all NEC members are available on the website and Strider magazine for members or social walk leaders to contact them directly.
- Sport Scotland provide free online training outlining key information and support to enable the safe return of organised physical activity as the UK moves out of COVID-19 lockdown. This module is available to all members across the UK. [Link to Training.](#)

## Appendix I: Social Walk COVID-19 Risk Assessment & Rules

<b>Route:</b>					
<b>Date Checklist Completed:</b>		<b>Recce Date:</b>		<b>Time/Date of Walk</b>	
<b>Walk Leader:</b>		<b>Start GR/GPS:</b>		<b>Finish GR/GPS:</b>	
<b>Distance:</b>		<b>Parking Location</b>		<b>COVID-19 Officer (Scotland)</b>	

<b><u>Hazards</u></b>	<b><u>Considerations / Further Notes (not exhaustive)</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken? (MUST click the box)</u></b>
<b>General Hazards and COVID-19 Compliance</b>		
<b>Parking Area</b>	Is there ample suitable parking given so that walkers will not lift share?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Traffic/Roads/Railways</b>	Are there suitable places at roads/railways and ensure crossings take place in a safe place whilst maintaining good hygiene and social distancing guidelines?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Terrain, paths, tracks and obstacles</b>	Has the route been recce'd to assess the risks associated to COVID-19? Is the terrain taken into consideration? Any potential barriers to enable social distancing and good hygiene (especially on high touch surfaces)? Have narrow routes been minimised where social distancing is not possible? Can the social walk be held at a less busy time of the day/day of week to enable more effective social distancing and less disruption to the local community?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Rest breaks, Refreshments &amp; Amenities</b>	Does the location for the coffee/lunch break allow for good hygiene, adequate social distancing and safe use of amenities?	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b><u>Hazards</u></b>	<b><u>Considerations / Further Notes (not exhaustive)</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken? (MUST click the box)</u></b>
<b>Weather</b>	Have extreme weather conditions been considered and its impact on good hygiene and social distancing? Will Met weather warnings be checked before commencing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Livestock</b>	Is there danger to walkers that may prevent covid-19 compliance measures around social distancing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>General COVID-19 Compliance</b>		
<b>Covid-19 General</b>	Does the route allow for social distancing wherever practicable? No shared equipment? Have all walkers been briefed to carry PPE & hand sanitiser? High touch surfaces are avoided where possible to appropriately clean if they cannot be avoided? Have walkers been briefed they must not attend if they or member of their family/bubble is showing Covid-19 symptoms or awaiting test results? Are there any local lockdowns that could impact the walk? Has the impact on the local community/residents been considered?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Participants</b>	Assessing the hazards outlined within this risk assessment, as walk leader I am comfortable to lead a maximum group of:	Insert number
<b>Register</b>	Are arrangements in place to complete a walkers register to enable Track and Trace / Test and Protect? Is it known how to upload the risk assessment and walkers register?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Comments and additions to the delivery plan</b>		

**EACH SECTION MUST BE SELECTED TO CONFIRM ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN**

## LDWA Social Walks: Delivery Plan and NEC Rules

Effective Date: 21 September 2020

This section gives the LDWA Covid-19 generic event delivery plan and rules. Annex II gives additional Guidelines for Social Walk Leaders information and is an integral part of the delivery plan. The last section of Risk Assessment Form (Annex 1) notes any additions to the Delivery Plan in respect of a specific event.

The following guidance superseded all advice given by the NEC and must be followed at all times:

- Government guidance set out in the 'organising outdoor sport and physical activity events framework' outlined in the guidance for the public on the phased return to outdoor sport and recreation in England.
- 'Phase 3: return to sport and physical activity' guidance published by Sport Scotland.

When participating in organised sport or licensed physical activity, you must not gather in groups of more than six before and after the activity. This would include going to pubs, cafés etc.

### **Before the Walk**

- In Scotland, a COVID-19 Officer must be nominated (usually a walk leader) who is responsible for ensuring the social walk adheres to the rules set out within this document. This nomination must be recorded on the uploaded walk register. Online training is available on Sports Scotland website to understand your responsibilities – [Link to training](#).

### **Walk Leaders must ensure prior to the event all individuals have been briefed with the following information:**

- **Walkers must not attend LDWA social walks** if they or a member of their permitted 'bubble' has recently been diagnosed with or show any COVID-19 symptoms, are awaiting test results or are self-isolating under current Government guidance.
- Walkers must not car share unless they from the same household or part of a permitted 'bubble' from another household.

- Walk leaders must ensure they have completed the COVID-19 risk assessment for groups of more than six in England. In Scotland the COVID-19 risk assessment must be completed for groups of more than 15 (from a max of 5 households). They must decide

on the maximum number of people that they are willing to lead based on the risk assessment (Maximum 30).

- Walk Leaders must ensure they keep referring to the government guidance set out in the introduction of this document for any relevant updates such as shielding or localised lockdowns.
- Walk leaders must retain copy of the NEC rules & guidance (for all social walks) and risk assessments, available to brief walkers at the start or to show to any member of the public or official (e.g. police) who asks what you are doing where appropriate to do so.
- Walk leaders must check with the group to ensure any individuals with additional needs or vulnerabilities can be accommodated.
- Walk leaders must take into account any situation when the walk may not go as expected, e.g. the need to support an injured walker whilst maintaining social distancing (see **On the Walk** below).
- Walk leaders must recce a route or an area with which they are familiar and apply a Covid-19 perspective.

### **Numbers on social walks**

- In England, no more than 30 walkers, including the walk leader to attend social walks and a risk assessment must be completed for groups of over six.
- In Scotland, no more than 30 walkers, including the walk leader to attend social walks and a risk assessment must be completed for groups of more 15 walkers (from up to a maximum of five households).
- In Wales, no more than 30 walkers, including the walk leader to attend social walks.

**These numbers must not be exceeded in any circumstances**

### **On the Walk**

- Social distancing must apply where practicable throughout the walk between fellow walkers and members of the public.
- All walkers must carry an appropriate hand sanitiser, a face covering and a small first aid kit.
- All walkers must not share personal items or equipment during a walk.

## **After the Walk**

- Walk leaders must send details of walk attendees (and risk assessment where applicable) to the Local Group representative to upload the documents to the LDWA walks register for Insurance and Track and Trace / Test and Protect purposes.



### Who are the LDWA?

The LDWA is an Association of people with the common interest of walking long distances mainly in rural, urban, mountainous or moorland areas. It is a Company limited by Guarantee. The Local Group Committees and the National Executive Committee (NEC) are all volunteers.  
<https://ldwa.org.uk/>

Contact: Risk Officer at [datamanager@ldwa.org.uk](mailto:datamanager@ldwa.org.uk)

Created: 08/08/2020

Amended and Approved by the NEC: 21/09/2020

## Appendix II: Leading Local Group Social Walks; Brief Guidelines for Social Walk Leaders

The LDWA through its local groups offers an extensive programme of local group social walks and it is part of the Association's ethos that any member can participate in walks advertised in Strider or on national or group webpages. Social walks aim to be interesting and enjoyable in themselves, but also, they should also be at a sociable pace that enables participants to talk and get to know each other during the walk.

The LDWA and its local groups depend on members volunteering to lead group walks. One of the strengths of the Association is that many members are willing to lead.

Here are some 'light touch' guidelines to leading walks which walk leaders need to be familiar with. They are just a reminder to experienced leaders but should be helpful to those new to leading or those considering doing so. Leading should not be a daunting prospect, but rather should provide the satisfaction of giving a group of walkers an enjoyable and safe day out. There are a few formal matters of which leaders need to be aware, and these are mentioned with links to LDWA policy statements.

### Well beforehand

Walk leaders must consider everyone's circumstances and level of risk will be different and any decision to participate, or not, will be respected. Everyone should be encouraged, support and given the opportunity to take part. Walk leaders should also bear in mind that whilst specific guidance applies to people who may be more vulnerable to Covid-19, these individuals should be encouraged to participate (with extra precautions) – unless they are self-isolating.

- Decide an outline route, approximate mileage, date and start time, and a suitable start/finish location with adequate parking. Bear in mind the time of year for the walk and length of daylight available. Some groups are introducing a grading system for walks, and this may need to be considered.
- Walk leaders should also review the latest Covid-19 countryside code, requested by landowners. This will demonstrate to them a safe approach has been adopted. Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>
- Walk leaders should consider the inclusion of additional communications to walkers on how they can support individuals that require additional support and/or with impairments.

- Give brief essential details of the walk to your group secretary in time for inclusion in Strider and on the local group LDWA web pages (pre-publicising walks is an insurance requirement). Sometimes late changes are unavoidable, and the group secretary or walks secretary can include 'stop press' information on the group and national websites and circulate details to members on the LDWA list. Some groups request that walkers contact the leader a few days before the walk in case of late changes. If it is considered appropriate an 'on the day' mobile contact number can be included with the details. Make sure potential walkers are aware of arrangements for lunch, e.g. some groups always have a pub stop for lunch, others never do.
- Work out a detailed route on 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 maps with possible alternatives. This should be on rights of way (or core paths in Scotland), permissive paths or access land unless you get specific permission to cross private land.
- Unless you are very familiar with the route, recce the route, and if necessary seek alternatives that circumvent difficulties or improve the walk. You may wish to make a GPS record of the route.
- Remember that paths that can be walked by an individual may not be suitable for a group, for example, very strenuous terrain, overgrown paths, paths passing close to houses, through some farmyards or livestock areas, across derelict stiles or fences, etc.
- Consider whether public toilets may have restricted access or not be open and identify appropriate areas for comfort stops.
- It may be possible to improve a route, perhaps with a little work with secateurs or by reporting a stile that needs replacing to the council.
- Have in mind alternatives or escape routes that could be useful under certain circumstances.
- Think where you might take breaks in fine weather (viewpoints) and poor weather (shelter).
- To add interest, perhaps find out a little about historic buildings, wildlife locations, distant features etc., to tell your group.
- In England a checklist (risk assessment) must be completed for groups of more than six. For other social walks, it is still considered best practice to complete the checklist.

- Be prepared to answer queries from prospective walkers who may contact you; be realistic about the standard of the walk, particularly to newcomers.

## The day before

- Check the weather forecast and consider any consequent changes to the route.
- Ensure that your own equipment is more than just adequate for your own needs, remembering that you may have to cope with an emergency. In particular, carry a bivvy bag, whistle, mobile phone, spare clothing etc. All equipment must not be shared with others because of the risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- Recommend to walkers to bring their own food and drink. If shops are used, allow time for queueing and ensure face coverings are used where appropriate.

## At the start

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start time to welcome walkers, particularly newcomers, and advise on parking as necessary.
- Complete the form listing those on the walk - for members record their membership number and for visitors record their name and some contact detail, e.g. address, email address or phone number. (Our insurers require that those on a walk may be contactable in the event of a claim.) This task could be delegated to another member on the walk. The form may be obtained from your group secretary or downloaded here and should be returned to the group secretary after completion; it will be stored securely for three years.
- Note that LDWA policy allows young people under the age of 18 to join social walks if they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Parents and legal guardians should be reminded to pay attention to the child's hygiene measures when they attend. Leaders also have a responsibility to young people and vulnerable adults, see the LDWA safeguarding policy with specific documents for young people and adults.
- Check that everyone is adequately equipped. The Walk leader should consider carrying extra items to use as back-up e.g. hand sanitiser, a face covering and a small first aid kit.
- If there are more than about five walkers appoint a backmarker.
- Spend a couple of minutes telling the group about the walk – many walkers like to follow their progress on their maps – and mention arrangements for breaks and lunch. If there

are significant changes from the advertised walk, e.g. if the mileage turns out to be significantly longer or shorter, let the group know. Bear in mind at all time social distancing and consider splitting briefings into more manageable groups to prevent shouting or groups congregating closer together.

- Point out, especially to newcomers, that photographs may be taken on the walk which may be published in Strider, on the group website, or on Facebook, so walkers should let the leader know if they object to appearing in any such photographs.
- Count the group.

## During the walk

- There are many styles of leadership – it's not necessary to be at the front all the time, but you should ensure no-one gets too far ahead, and you should be at the front when the route is difficult or not obvious.
- Be particularly alert at hazards such as road crossings, rough sections, livestock areas, etc. Crossing fields with cattle requires particular care and sometimes an alternative route may be necessary.
- Consider how you can meet Covid-19 compliance with high touch surfaces such as stiles and gates. Consider use of hand sanitiser or restrict the number of people who touch the gate/stile.
- Judging the right pace can be difficult: a reasonable rate of progress is needed but always remember that these are social walks and that walkers should not feel unduly pushed.
- Whilst walkers may get a little spread out at times, the group must be kept essentially together whilst maintaining appropriate social distancing. Keep in touch visually with the backmarker and if necessary slow down or wait so the party does not get too spread out.
- Consider waiting a little, whilst maintaining appropriate social distancing at stiles or gates (on the far side) to avoid the group becoming too spaced.
- In mist, where the terrain is awkward, or where the route is intricate, ensure that the group keeps close together whilst maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- Count the group from time to time to check no-one is missing.

- If any walker decides to leave the walk for any reason, they must let the leader know. Make it clear that they are no longer part of the walk and you have no further responsibility towards them. If appropriate provide them with helpful information, e.g. directions to a bus stop if they wish to get a bus back.
- At all costs avoid part of the group getting detached from the rest and perhaps going off the wrong way – attempting to get everyone back together can be time-consuming and frustrating for everyone.
- Be prepared to shorten or modify the route if the state of the weather or the party make this wise.
- Whilst this is undesirable, it may very occasionally be necessary or appropriate to split the group into two, and this must be done in a managed way with everyone clear about what is happening. For example, this might be when it becomes clear that some of the group will not be able to complete the full route and need to cut back or divert to a bus stop. It is highly desirable that any split-off group includes a group member who is known to be competent at navigation and who has a map and adequate local knowledge.
- Indicate how long each break will be and give a two-minute warning before restarting.
- Try to talk to everyone, especially newcomers, during the day.
- Do your best to ensure that everyone enjoys the walk.

## At the end of the walk

- Thank walkers for coming and remind them of the next walk.
- Have a word with any newcomers to encourage them to come on future walks and to join the LDWA. Non-members are expected to join after coming on three walks.
- If there have been any accidents, injuries or incidents, including damage to property, ensure that an incident form, which is downloadable from the library or as a Word.doc form, is completed and returned to the LDWA Treasurer. Note that the LDWA has an insurance policy which covers third party liability. The policy may be found in several documents in the LDWA library and any queries should be made to the Treasurer. Similarly, any incidents relating to disclosure or witnessing signs of abuse of young people or vulnerable adults should be reported on the form here (children) or here (adults).

## Possible problems

- Emergencies:

Very occasionally there is a serious medical emergency, such as a walker collapsing or breaking a limb, and you must decide what action to take – this will depend on the circumstances. The top priority is to get help by dialling 999 or 112 from a mobile or by dispatching someone to the nearest phone box or house. Whilst a grid reference is essential, other information such as access details may be needed, and someone may need to be sent to the nearest accessible road to meet an ambulance. Unless one of the group is trained in first aid, there may be little else that can be done until help arrives except keeping the casualty warm and providing reassurance. Particularly in bad conditions, a leader may appoint a deputy to lead most of the group to the finish of the walk whilst just a few wait at the incident scene.

Where major incidents take place and first aid is essential, walkers are reminded that face coverings are also advisable when undertaking treatment. Injuries during the event should still be treated as participant wellbeing is paramount. After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact, or the minimum 2 metre social distancing was maintained.

- First aid

All walkers are strongly encouraged to carry personal first aid kits sufficient for minor problems. A leader may carry extra sterile dressings and bandages but current advice is that leaders should not give tablets, medication or creams to others. Those who lead walks regularly should consider taking one of the first aid courses offered by local St John Ambulance or Red Cross groups. Walkers should be strongly advised to carry an ICE (in case of emergency) card in the top of their rucksack giving details of an emergency contact and of any medical conditions. Unless absolutely necessary, social distancing rules must not be broken to administer first aid. In circumstances where it is required Face coverings are also advisable when undertaking treatment. Injuries during the event should still be treated as participant wellbeing is paramount. After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact, or the minimum 2 metre social distancing was maintained.

- Bad conditions

If the weather deteriorates you should consider shortening the walk or diverting to a less exposed alternative.

- The slow walker

If a walker is lagging, encouragement from the leader can be effective; however, if such a walker feels inadequate, they may slow even more. Occasionally someone may fall behind so much early on that it is obvious that he/she will not complete the route in a reasonable time. This needs to be pointed out to the person sooner rather than later, and options such as cutbacks, bus options, etc, considered. If it is felt that an inexperienced walker cannot be left alone a member of the group may need to be found to accompany them. Sometimes putting a slow walker at the front of the group can have a psychological effect to speed them up a little.

- The fast walker

Both leader and walkers should remember that the walk is a social walk with the aim of enabling like-minded people to walk a set route together. Sometimes a walker will persistently dash off far ahead (not always in the right direction) and be difficult to keep track of. Tactfully point out that, on a group walk, walkers are expected to stay with the group. Anyone not accepting this should be told to continue independently and under their own responsibility for route finding. On the other hand, if there is a section where walkers' paces are obviously going to vary, for example on a steep ascent, there is no harm in telling faster walkers to go ahead and wait at an obvious landmark, such as at the top of a hill.

- The Countryside Code

The Countryside Code for England and Wales and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code set out rights and responsibilities for those using the countryside. Any disregard for the Codes can bring the LDWA into disrepute. Most walkers are aware of their responsibilities, but occasionally a walker may drop litter, etc., and you should point out politely but firmly that this is not acceptable. Ensure (in conjunction with the backmarker) that gates are left in their original state and that any dogs are properly under control. Should a group be challenged by a landowner or other countryside user be polite, calm and cooperative but without conceding access rights, etc.

- Getting lost

It shouldn't happen on a properly recced walk, but it does. Be adept enough with the map or GPS device to relocate and get back onto the intended route, perhaps even without anyone noticing the error.

## Further matters and links

- Details of the LDWA insurance policy (as well as other policies) may be found in several documents in the library. Queries relating to insurance should be referred to the LDWA Treasurer.
- It is important that walk leaders are sensitive to personal information relating to walkers and conform to the LDWA GDPR statement.
- Should anyone on an LDWA walk behave in an unacceptable or abusive way, details and names of witnesses should be noted and the matter reported to the LDWA General Secretary who will consider whether there is a case to invoke the Association's disciplinary procedures.
- The LDWA has specific guidance about dogs on walks. The decision to allow dogs on walks rests with the walk leader or walk organiser, though if no dogs are allowed this must be made clear in Strider prior to the walk. Some local groups have general policies concerning dogs. Assistance dogs are normally allowed on LDWA walks. The walk leader can insist on dogs being on leads, and in particular dogs must be kept on leads anywhere where there is a possibility of livestock.