



Local Group Social Walks Policy

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Version	Author	Notes
V1 March 2025	Madeleine Watson	Draft following review of social walks Approved by NEC on 27/04/25

Purpose

The Long Distance Walkers Association 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 a network of local groups across the UK who arrange social and challenge walk events. The LDWA is recognised as national governing board (NGB) for rambling by Sport England, Sport Scotland and Sport Wales.

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

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Association's policy relating to social walks.

Policy Statement

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 any social walks advertised. Social walks aim to be interesting and enjoyable in themselves, but also, they should 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.

A group social walk must be listed on the group's website in order to be classed as an LDWA walk.

The LDWA strongly recommends that walk leaders **check the route out** several weeks in advance and, as part of this, identify any potential issues which may affect the group's safety. Measures to avoid / prevent any safety issues should be considered and necessary adjustments made to the route.

In cases where it is not possible to check the route in advance (e.g. group walks which take place as part of a weekend away) the walk leader should use maps, guidebooks, any local knowledge and online tools to help identify any safety issues which may affect the group's safety.

A simple **safety checklist** should be completed by the leader considering the safety of the group. The checklist may be uploaded to the social walks database.

A **register** of people attending the walk will be taken on the day containing name, membership number (or contact details for visitors), emergency contact details. The register must be saved securely, preferable on the associations' website and will be stored for 1 year.

Anyone joining a group walk is responsible for ensuring they are appropriately prepared for the walk; e.g. having suitable clothing and footwear, food, water, a first aid kit, etc.

The LDWA will set up and maintain a **voluntary register of walk leaders**. This will enable the NEC to engage and work with this community easily and will allow this community to more readily share information and advice with each other and the NEC.

The LDWA will develop a **training and awareness package** for walk leaders which will build awareness and understanding, amongst the walk leader community, of the importance of leading walks safely and how the LDWA's policy and recommended good practice will enable them to do this successfully. This will help gain buy-in, and compliance with this policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy was introduced in March 2025 and will be regularly monitored and reviewed.