



Covid-19 Safe LDWA Local Group Walks

Frequently Asked Questions for LDWA Local Groups and Walk Leaders

We've put together some Q&As from the LG Zoom Call on 13 August 2020 at 19:00. We were really pleased with the feedback and are keen that people should ask questions if they are unsure of anything. We want to make sure that this process is as easy to understand as possible and appreciate feedback but do message Julia Warman at membership@ldwa.org.uk with any specific questions. Don't worry if you think your question might sound silly, we want to ensure our walk leaders are confident and comfortable.

Q. Isn't it just too difficult to lead a social walk at the moment?

A. We're aware that some walk leaders aren't quite ready to lead walks yet, which we fully understand. We are also aware that some walk leaders are ready, but they're nervous about all the rules they need to follow. The feedback we've had is that leaders have found it manageable, ensure that there's a recce, work through the tick boxes on the risk assessment and make any adjustments to your route that you think would be useful. It's really useful for us to have more group walks, returning to some form of normality and ensuring people still engage with the LDWA. We do appreciate the walks and we are always ready to offer assistance to walk leaders.

Q. There seems to be a lot of paperwork, is it necessary?

A. In addition to the walk register, it's just the risk assessment. We've made this tick box so that walk leaders can just have a reminder of the things they need to think about. We know that most walk leaders think about these issues before every walk, but working through the tick boxes provides some structure and shows other people that we're taking this seriously and considering a wide range of different issues. To ensure that the LDWA's reputation is maintained, it's not just members we want to feel reassured, it's the wider community and the areas in which we walk.

Q - If we're to be required to keep track & trace info for groups of more than six, why not for smaller groups?

A – Walk registers are required for insurance purposes regardless of the size of group and should be made available to the authorities in the event of a track and trace event. This has been clarified within the Social Walk Rules, Guidance and Risk Assessment.

Q – Is it worth adding some more information about symptoms and length of symptoms etc, or a link to the latest govt info?

A – The NEC has taken the decision to keep the documentation specific to social walks. It assumes that the walk leader is keeping abreast of current events. Due to the fluid nature of Covid-19, the NEC rules states that any government guidance supersedes all advice given by the NEC if changes take place.

Q – The document isn't really a risk assessment as it should include likelihood and impact scores. Will it be sufficient for Sport England?

A – The NEC has sought advice from the Ramblers and British Orienteering who have both adopted the risk assessment/checklist approach. Sport England have advised they are comfortable with the approach taken by these National Governing Bodies. The NEC took the difficult decision to balance robustness of the risk assessment with the ease of use. Hopefully the balance will be struck and will meet Sport England/Insurer requirements as well as walk leaders.

Q – As a walk leader, I am not comfortable with leading a walk of 30. Can I reduce the numbers?

A – Absolutely! The walk leader should only take the number of participants they feel they can safely manage in accordance with the risk assessment. The risk assessment has been updated to reflect a section to capture the maximum number for each social walk.

Q – Can I add my walks to the national listings?

A – Yes, just ensure that you do not provide specific start times and locations. Walkers should contact walk leaders or their representatives to attend and ensure group numbers are managed appropriately. The local groups toolkit provides step by step instructions on how to publish social walks.

Q – What's the difference between all these documents? It seems a little confusing.

A – The document presented to representatives on the LG zoom meeting on 13 August was a draft application that will be submitted to Sport England and our Insurers to ensure we have covered key Covid-19 compliance risks and allow walk leaders in England to lead a walk with more than six individuals. Once finalised and approved, further communications will be provided to local groups:

- Risk Assessment. This must be used for walks with over 6 participants in England (best practice for all others)
- NEC rules for all social walks. Setting out rules that must be adhered to.
- Social walk guidelines. Helpful guidance to overcome Covid-19 challenges and social walks in general.

Q – Does the walk leader have to carry the risk assessment on their walk?

A – Yes for walks in England with participants over six (best practice for others). It should be made 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.

Q – Why is there a mix of Covid-19 and general matters captured in the risk assessment?

A – Walk leaders must demonstrate in addition to Covid-19 compliance that all hazards have been considered. Evidencing this assessment that is generally conducted in the leader's head will provide a more compelling case to Sport England and our Insurers that the LDWA has robust arrangements in place for social walks in general. It will also help enhance the LDWA's reputation as an association that takes the safety of its walkers very seriously.

Q - On the risk assessment itself - maybe add a point that walkers should walk single file when meeting other persons if the path is narrow. I guess it is obvious for members of the LDWA... but I see a lot of walkers who are not doing that.

A – Walking single file is one mitigant to narrow paths. The NEC wants to leave any mitigating activity to the walk leaders who will be best placed to assess whether this is the best course of action or maybe even re-routing the walk via a different path.

Q – How can we ensure the risk assessment is comprehensive to include other matters as well as Covid-19? It is not onerous and as XXXXX is now saying it makes the leader think. Many members may assume all is OK without thinking them through.

A – The risk assessment is designed to assess key hazards, not just Covid-19 compliance. These are minimum standards set as a 'must' to walk leaders. Walk leaders are encouraged to do further risk assessments on other matters if it is felt appropriate.

Q – Are only primary members allowed on walks now numbers have increased?

A – No. It is for the walk leader to manage numbers and whether associate or non-members can attend. Members must take priority if social walks are over-subscribed.