

Ashby u3a Guidelines for walking groups

(Revised 19 July 2021)

The National u3a published “Advice for Restarting Interest Groups England 7th August 2020” which included advice for Walking Activities, including non-Covid risk assessments. However this seems to have been withdrawn as of 19-7-21. The following guidelines therefore follow those original guidelines but are updated to suit the removal of government restrictions:

The salient points are listed below, they are a combination of u3a and Ramblers guidelines.

Before restarting walking:

1. The Group Leader MUST first notify their u3a committee and then follow these guidelines.
2. Advise all group members how they must comply with the Covid guidance when participating in a walk. This could be placed on the website and/or emailed to all group members.
3. Complete a risk assessment for Covid-19 and non Covid-19 elements of undertaking the walk. (See below)

Prior to each walk the Group Leader must:

1. The group size is unlimited as of 19th July 2021. Group Leaders and/or Walk Leaders may wish to restrict numbers to whatever they and group members feel comfortable with. Make sure that this max number is published with the walk details.
2. Remind members not to participate if they are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms or have been in contact with anyone who has Covid-19.
3. Advise group members to book in with the Group Leader before the walk to ensure there is a place available.
4. Ensure the risk assessment of the walk is up to date and provide info to walkers to manage expectations and personal safety.

At the start of the walk the Walk Leader must:

1. Record the date of the walk and a list of all members taking part. This is for Test and Trace should any walker, or any venue visited, test positive for Covid-19.
2. Remind members of hygiene requirements, for example to bring hand sanitizer, face masks and to not share refreshments.
3. Recommend that walkers bring their own basic first aid kit to avoid cross-contamination.
4. Be prepared to advise ill-equipped walkers not to go but they must make the final decision

During the walk

1. As a Walk Leader –be prepared to manage incidents by carrying a first-aid kit, a face covering and possibly disposable gloves.
2. As a group –follow the government guidelines on social contact & physical distancing. Currently 2m spacing if unmasked.
3. Do not swap equipment such as walking poles.
4. Do not share refreshments.
5. Avoid touching gates, stiles etc. wherever possible and frequent use of hand sanitiser is recommended.

After the walk

1. Continue to maintain physical distancing, including in any facilities where groups of people congregate.
2. Remind anyone who develops symptoms within 48 hours of the walk to inform the Group Leader, to apply for a Covid-19 test, and to support NHS contact tracing if requested.
3. The list of participants must be kept by the Group Leader for 21 days for NHS Test and Trace and a copy sent as soon as possible to the Groups Coordinator at covid@ashbyu3a.co.uk

Ashby u3a Group Walks – risk assessment

This risk assessment applies to all Ashby u3a walking groups and any other Ashby u3a organised event which involves walking. All walks should be checked during recce and during the walk to ensure that both the walk and the participant's actions conform to it.

Possible hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Ways to control the risk	Has suitable action been taken?
Transmission of COVID-19 through close contact/ meeting other people	Walkers, members of the public – risk of spreading or catching COVID-19	Plan the walk for a less busy time.	
		Avoid particularly busy or narrow routes where physical distancing is not possible.	
		Give clear information about limiting the group size in line with Leaders guidelines	
		Remind walkers beforehand about the guidelines, including on travel & transport.	
		Although social distancing is no longer required in law, advise walkers at the start of the walk to maintain a reasonable distance, whilst walking, at refreshment breaks and at any pinch points or road crossings – this is everyone's responsibility.	
		Carry a face covering in case of incidents.	
		Ensure you have a record of who attended the walk, for contact tracing.	
Transmission of COVID-19 through close contact with other people at cafés, pubs etc.	Walkers, members of the public – risk of spreading or catching COVID-19	Ensure that the café, pub etc. is Covid-19 secure and can accommodate the number of people on the walk.	
Transmission of COVID-19 through touching gates, stiles, fences or equipment	Walkers, members of the public – risk of spreading or catching COVID-19	Avoid touching gates and path furniture where possible.	
		Suggest walkers bring hand sanitiser.	
		Advise walkers not to share food, drink or equipment such as walking poles.	

Possible hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Ways to control the risk	Has suitable action been taken?
Bad weather (including extreme temperatures)	Walkers – risk of illness and injury, risk of the group being stranded	Check the weather forecast and postpone/cancel if necessary. Advise walkers to bring suitable clothing and items for the conditions including suncream in hot weather Make a note of 'escape routes' on the recce.	
Busy roads	Walkers – risk of vehicle collisions	Avoid routes along busy roads and/or check for suitable crossing places on the recce.	
Steep, slippery or muddy sections.	Walkers – risk of trips/slips	Check for muddy/slippery sections on the recce and adapt the route if necessary. Advise walkers to bring suitable footwear for the conditions.	
Livestock	Walkers – risk of injury	Cross fields with livestock calmly and quietly, keeping the group together. Be prepared to divert around livestock if necessary.	
	Risk of property damage if livestock escape	Follow the Countryside Code (England & Wales) and Access Code (Scotland). Leave gates and property as you find them.	
Cliffs or sheer drops	Walkers – risk of falls	Check paths are suitable for a group to use safely and make changes if necessary.	
		Follow any local warnings or signs, and advise walkers to keep away from the edge.	

Extra considerations for the Short Walks group and any other walk involving less agile members

Possible hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Ways to control the risk	Has suitable action been taken?
Stiles and uneven ground	Walkers – risk of injury	Recce the route and plan to avoid all stiles and uneven ground.	
		Remind walkers to bring walking poles if they need them	