

## Health and Community Partner walk initiatives

Walking is an accessible and extremely cost effective health intervention (1,2) providing excellent social return on investment (3). These features make a walking initiative a good investment for any organisation with a health outcome focus or a community organisation seeking to strengthen its work within a community and enhance community cohesion.

Walking for Health Bristol services are increasingly being taken up by both community and health partners with growing emphasis on engaging with some of Bristol's 'harder to reach' populations. Walking together breaks down barriers, increases inclusion and fosters understanding.

A recent project evaluation (4) featured some of the focussed work undertaken with adults with learning difficulties, mental ill health and Bristol's Somali communities.

- **“By coming out on a health walk it helps me a lot...it’s about equality, getting adults with learning difficulties included in the healthy walks ”** - Health Trainer/walk leader with learning difficulties.
- **“Walking makes me more motivated to get up in the mornings. I lose weight when I walk regularly”** - Walker, Walking in Mind mental health group
- **“When I came over here, my activity stopped. I mean, here there is the system, every space in this country is allocated. This green space is important, the social meeting is important. Walking group has a lot of different purposes. If I have to work I miss it “** Walker, Somali walking group

Walk for Health Bristol can offer a low cost walking initiative start up, training and support service tailored to individual organisations.

### References:

1. Walking for health: a cost effective health solution, Natural England 2010
2. Heron C, and Bradshaw G, walk this way: recognising value in active health prevention, Local government Information Unit, 2010
3. Bums off seats, social return on investment study 2010, Greenspace Scotland.
4. Douglas K, and Carless D, Walking the way to health in Bristol, 2011