

GM Walking Fund: supporting communities to move more

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Creating opportunities for disadvantaged groups to get active

Established in 2020 by GreaterSport, the GM Walking Fund is designed to offer grants to increase walking in communities in Greater Manchester. Based on Sport England's Active Lives data, we prioritise groups who may have fewer opportunities to be more active, including:

- People with disabilities and long-term health conditions
- People from lower socio-economic groups
- People from diverse ethnic communities

We look to fund projects that link in with the wider health and care system to improve the health of our region. All the walking projects we fund help people to improve their physical and mental health, while having fun and making new friends at the same time.

Read more about some of the projects we've funded on the links below:

- Manchester Deaf Centre
- Speakeasy
- The Fed



Who has applied for grants so far?

There are an incredibly diverse range of projects, from walking groups to photography walks, bilingual walk and talk sessions, to environmental improvements to make public spaces more accessible for people with mobility needs.

Different organisations can apply for funding with us and then valued local partners GMCVO, 10GM and Salford CVS manage the process on our behalf.

The funded groups submit monitoring and evaluation (M&E) information at the end of their walking projects which is evidence-led. We ask how many people have taken part, how many attended regularly, how much walking has increased post-project, and about participants' mental and physical health before and after the project.

“Whether it’s walking activities for children and young people with disabilities and their families in Stockport; wellbeing walks in Wigan for new mums and mums-to-be; or walking tours of Manchester run by guides with lived experience of homelessness; these fantastic projects have brought people together to get out walking and have fun.” - GreaterSport



Nordic Walks, by Jo Taylor: Founder and director of After Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCDiagnosis)

One very successful walking project was set up by Jo Taylor. Jo has secondary breast cancer and is a huge advocate of physical activity and specifically Nordic walking because there is evidence that this type of exercise can help with the physical and emotional symptoms associated with breast cancer.

Jo, through her breast cancer support organisation ABCDiagnosis, received a grant from the GM Walking Fund to train a network of women with breast cancer in Nordic walking so they could set up their own groups all around Greater Manchester. The idea was that this would vastly increase the capacity and reach of these groups across our region.

So far, the project has trained 13 new Nordic walking instructors who are in the process of setting up their own Nordic walking groups for other people with breast cancer, both primary and secondary.



“I’ve just been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer and the opportunity to get out walking and socialising with people who understand what I’m going through has been massively helpful for me.” – Participant

Click to watch the video



What has GM walking Fund achieved so far?

When asked about the difference the funding had made to their organisations, people said that it had helped them to attract new members and volunteers, upskill existing volunteers, and increase their social media presence.

The projects also helped grant recipients to develop relationships with other VCSE organisations and public sector services. Some organisations were able to attract further funding for their organisations following the GM Walking grant.

- Since 2020, we've distributed nearly **£315k of grants** to **125 organisations**
- Nearly **50% of successful applicants** have been based in the **least affluent areas** of Greater Manchester
- **94% of funded groups** said **walking had increased** among the **project beneficiaries**
- The groups we funded in 2020-2022 have now delivered their projects and **63% of these went on to continue with their walking activities**

[Read about the 'Milltown to Mountains' case story](#)



Conclusions and implications for the GM Walking fund

We use a reflections log to capture learning which will help us to refine the process in future rounds of the fund.

We've identified a need to work on tackling inequalities in the application process. Some groups for whom English is not their first language are at a disadvantage when completing a traditional written application form. Therefore, we're looking at more flexible ways to apply, such as videos, voice notes or face-to-face chats.

We've learnt the importance of working with partners across the system to try to secure other sources of funding for unsuccessful applicants. This has led to at least a further four groups receiving funding from other sources.

“If you have available funds and are considering running a grant scheme to get people more active, go for it! It might seem like a lot of work, but there are many organisations that can help with the administration of the grants. It's very rewarding and inspiring seeing the great work going on in communities.”

- GreaterSport



For more information on the GM Walking Fund please contact:
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