

Project Title
“Walk with Me Study”

**Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a peer-led walking programme to
increase physical activity in inactive older adults**

Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in a research study investigating the effectiveness of trained volunteers delivering a walking programme to adults aged over 60 years. This study is being conducted by researchers from the Ulster University.

Please read the following information carefully, and take some time to decide if you wish to take part. If you have any questions, or would like more information on any aspect of the research, please ask us. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

There is a clear link between being regularly physically active and a healthy life. However, people often find it difficult to fit physical activity into their lives. The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of a peer led physical activity programme. Peer led programmes are delivered by members of the public, who are not healthcare professionals, but have received training in delivering a walking intervention. They will guide participants through a 12 week walking programme.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to take part because you responded to an invitation to participate. You are part of a total group of approximately 350 people who have been invited to take part in this study.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. If you do agree to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

We want to investigate how helpful a peer led physical activity programme is in assisting adults aged over 60 years to become more active. If you are interested in taking part, the next step will be to contact the study team via telephone or email. A trained researcher will ask you to provide some information about yourself in order for us to ensure you are eligible to take part. If eligible, we will then set up an appointment to explain more about the study. This meeting can take place at a public venue, your home, or at the university, depending on what you would prefer. At this meeting, you will be asked to fill out a consent form to indicate you are willing to

participate and fill in some more details about yourself. You will also be asked to wear an activity monitor (small device worn on an elasticated belt around your waist) for seven days and complete questionnaires about your levels of activity, mental and physical health, quality of life and social engagement/isolation. Measures of our weight, height, blood pressure and physical function will also be recorded. All participants will be asked to complete the questionnaires and wear the activity monitor for 7 days at 3 months 6 months and 12 months later to assess what progress has been made. All participants will also be asked to record any contact they have with the health service over the course of the study in a specially designed diary.

Once this stage is complete you will be allocated completely at random to one of two groups:

1. Peer Led Walking Programme group
2. Control group

Peer Led Walking Programme

Participants in the *Peer Led Walking Programme Group* will be referred to a trained peer mentor. These are trained, nonprofessional members of the public who have volunteered to help deliver the walking programme. The peer-led walking programme will be delivered as an addition to the current Public Health Agency's Walk Leaders Network (which offers weekly led group walks) and supported by community organisations aligned to the Public Health Agency.

Participants will receive a letter to inform them the name of their peer mentor, who will then make contact within seven days to arrange an initial appointment. During the first, approximately one hour, 'introductory' session, the peer mentor will discuss the content of the programme with you and arrange for further follow-up meetings.

The programme will involve using a small monitor called a pedometer to help you track your activity levels and set personal physical activity goals. You will also have the opportunity for regular discussion with your peer mentor as to how to incorporate activity into your daily routine. Peer mentors will be encouraged to make contact with you every week, either in person or by telephone, with a minimum of fortnightly face-to-face meetings. During the face-to-face meeting, you will have the opportunity to go for a short walk with your peer mentor in your local neighbourhood.

After 12-weeks, the formal peer-led component will finish, and participants in the intervention group will be signposted to other activity programmes in the community to encourage maintenance of their activity level

Control Group

At the outset of the trial, members of the control group will receive a health promotion booklet on physical activity, produced by the Public Health Agency. This contains brief information on the benefits of regular physical activity and motivational messages to help identify and overcome common barriers to increasing physical activity.

After the 12 month data collection point, they will be offered a choice of opportunities to engage in physical activity. These opportunities will include an offer of a

pedometer and instructions on how to begin a self-directed walking programme. They will also be offered referral to the local exercise referral scheme and local walking groups in their area, both of which the Health and Social Care Trust are responsible for delivering.

As a participant in either the Peer Led Walking Programme Group, or the Control Group, you may be asked to take part in a focus group which will explore your opinions about the research. These sessions will be recorded with an audio device. Following the interview, they will be transcribed by a member of the research team and any information that could identify you or others will be removed. Audio recordings will be deleted following transcription.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

With your agreement, your GP will be advised of your participation in this research study. All information that is collected about you during the course of the study will be kept strictly confidential. Your personal information will be stored separately from information about your physical activity and health. This means that when the researchers look at the results in more detail, your information will be anonymous. If direct quotes are used in reports or publications, these will be anonymised and you will not be identifiable. All information relating to the study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and on a password protected computer available only to the study researchers, including co-investigators. Any data passed onto a 3rd party or made publicly available (e.g. to other academic researchers) will be completely anonymised and you will not be identifiable in any way.

Ulster University is the sponsor or managing organisation for this study and we will use information gathered from you and/or your records in order to carry it out. We will act as the data controller, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly, as stipulated in GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Ulster University will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished. You can find out more about how we look after your information at: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/about/governance/compliance/gdpr>

As a university we use personal identifying information to conduct research to review and improve people's health, wellbeing and care, the services they use and our understanding of the world in which we live. As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personal identifying information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a study, we will use your data to conduct the research and analyse the information and findings.

We need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate and therefore your rights to access, change or move your information are limited. You should note that if you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal identifying information possible.

Health, care and other human research should serve the public interest, which means that we have to demonstrate that our research serves the interests of society as a whole. We do this by following University and appropriate UK policies and

codes of practice. The only people in the University who will have access to your personal identifying information will be those who need to contact you for the study or to carry out audits of the research.

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our Data Protection Officer is Eamon Mullan; you can contact him at: e.mullan@ulster.ac.uk.

6. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be published in a scientific journal. You will not be identified in any publication. When the study is complete, a letter will be sent to you to give you the main results. This information will help us better understand how to promote physical activity and therefore benefit you and others.

7. Who is organising and funding the research?

The study has been organised by members of the Institute of Mental Health Sciences at Ulster University. It is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Public Health Research (PHR) Programme.

8. Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the North of Scotland (2) Research Ethics Committees.

9. Contact for further information

For further information contact:

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