

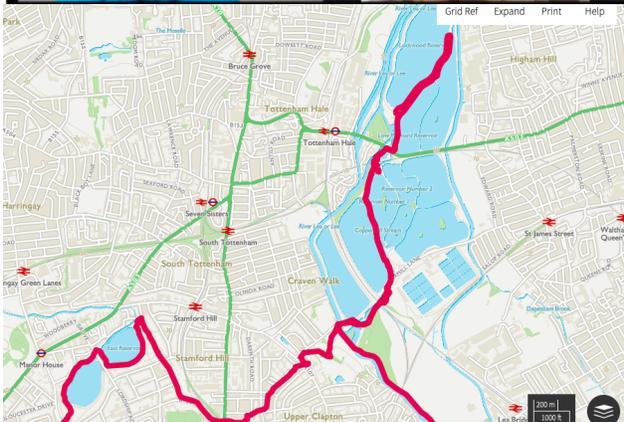


Wheely Tots



Walking Connections Toolkit

April 2021





About us

Wheely Tots is a registered charity based in Haringey, North London. We believe all children (and families and communities) should be healthy, confident and resilient. We improve social integration through virtual and in-person walking and cycling-related activities.

Walking Connections

Walking Connections was a project funded by [Clarion Futures Digital](#). Between September 2020 and March 2021, we supported children's centres and families in Tottenham to use digital tools to plan and map walks in their local area, and connect with their communities. The project sought to improve social connections, wellbeing and digital inclusion.

We delivered sessions over Zoom, enabling families to connect with each other virtually, as well as in-person walks while it was safe. The families became more confident at using digital tools and accessing online provision and connected with each other independently from the sessions.

In this toolkit, we share some of the things we co-developed and learnt with the families and children's centre staff who talk part. These ideas encourage friends and family who might be inactive and digitally excluded to connect virtually, use digital tools to plan walks, and get out and about.

Why walking?

- Walking is a great way to improve mental and physical health - and you need very little equipment. It's also a COVID-safe activity.
- Walking a mile in 20 minutes burns approximately the same amount of energy as: running a mile in 10 minutes, 16 minutes of aerobics, playing football for 12 minutes or 16 minutes cycling.
- 10 minutes brisk walking increases mental alertness, energy and positive mood.

Ways to connect and walk virtually

1. Accessing online sessions

Here are some tips for helping digitally excluded friends and family access online sessions

- Share gentle reminders about the session via text or a telephone call the day before, and on the morning of the session
- Do a dry run with the platform (e.g. Zoom) so that it's familiar to them
- On the day, be on hand by telephone to help them to log on to the session
- Check they can understand basic functions - e.g. chat, camera off and on, mic off and on



2. Connecting through sharing our dream walks

With families who took part, we developed a simple activity to introduce people to walking and help foster social connections. It's a great way to get to know each other and use our imaginations (as well as go on fantasy trips!).

Where did you last walk?

*E.g. To the shops
To the park*

Where would you like to go?

*E.g. The forest in Poland
Devon
Barbados
The Alps*

OK, so you've walked to your dream destination. Tell us:

- How did you get there?
- What did you eat?
- Who did you go with?
- What did you see?

E.g. I went with my daughter, my friend and her daughter to the forest in Poland. We took jam sandwiches and while we were there, we picked and cooked wild mushrooms. It took us a week to walk there and we saw some mountains on the way and paddled in the sea.

Why this works

- Everyone can get involved
- It's fun
- Makes a local walk seem more manageable when you've been talking about walking to Poland!
- You might be able to figure out and overcome barriers to people walking. If someone's fantasy walk can be talked through then you can work out a way, with help and food, to go on a local walk
- The "techy stuff" eg using apps becomes purposeful: there is genuine motivation to use them and ask friends, neighbours and family to help rather than feeling alone and further isolated



3. Go on virtual walks together

During the pandemic, we've discovered that you don't need to be in the same place to walk together. Families in the project kept each other company on their own, socially distant walks by connecting via Zoom or a telephone call.

We've walked with people in [South London](#), [Wales](#) and even [New Zealand](#)! You can hear some of our virtual walking adventures on our podcast

4. Planning your walks

Here are some apps that can help you plan, and sometimes map, your walks.

[Strava](#) - a great way to track walks you've been on - routes and distances

[CityMapper](#) - you can plan walking and cycling routes with CityMapper, if it's available in your area

[Google Maps](#) - another excellent planning tool

[Ordnance Survey OSMaps](#) - you can track and discover routes on this app

5. Haringey routes

Here are some of our favourite local walking and cycling routes. We've used the [Ordnance Survey OSMaps](#) app to track these routes. You can download the free version on a tablet or smartphone to follow the routes.

[Finsbury Park Circular](#)

[Newington Green Loop](#)

[Clissold Park to Stoke Newington Church Street \(the long way round\)](#)

[Finsbury Park to Green Park](#)

[Finsbury Park via Ally Pally \(circular\)](#)

[Parkland Walk \(the long way round\)](#)

Next steps

Find Wheely Tots' walking opportunities at <http://wheelytots.com/walking/>

Contact us on 07397 902255 or at <https://wheelytots.com/contact/>

Information on walking in Haringey and London:

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/travel/walking/haringey-walks>

Haringey-based walking groups: <https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/haringey-walk-way>

Walking in London: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking/top-walking-routes>