



Walk Guidelines #feedthehomelessBRISTOL

Our walk guidelines aim to prepare walkers in understanding how walks are organised and considerations to ensure your safety and those of others whilst walking. These guidelines should be read together with the Walking Policy.

We kindly request during a walk that volunteers follow these guidelines and any advice or directions given by the Heads of Walk Shada Nasrullah and Gary Webber, by the Lead Walkers on duty or the Project Co-ordinator Naseem Talukdar.

Before setting off on a Walk

Please let the Head of Walk or Project Co-ordinator know beforehand if you have any health issues that may impact your ability to take part in walking, or which you feel are adequately managed but we should be aware of. This can be done directly with them in person, by phone or private message.

Walkers are requested to have an account with Neighbourly, a simple online booking system to be able to volunteer for walks. Details on how to join will be sent by the management team.

Our designated meeting place is Cabot Circus Car Park, Ground Level, Area A. As walkers gather together, we wait for any food being dropped off and organise the distribution into bags and trolleys. Walkers will be asked to help carry items to be distributed on the walk and to wear our high visibility safety tops. Our meeting time is **7.45pm** and walks last approximately 3 to 4 hours. We are happy for walkers to join the walk part way, either meeting on route or leaving earlier. Please let Shada or Gary or the Lead Walker know if you plan to do this before a walk and by adding a note on Neighbourly, so we can ensure a sufficient and safe number of walkers.

For your personal safety we request you:

- Always keep with the group or in pairs and avoid walking alone.
- Walking requires that we work as a team and look out for each other to maximise our safety.
- Wear suitable clothing. It's surprising how cold it gets at night and if it's raining you'll need to make sure you keep dry.
- Don't wear expensive jewellery, clothes or carry excessive money or valuable items. This is to keep yourself safe and to avoid offending or embarrassing service users who survive on donated clothes.
- Keep a phone on you, but safely and securely out of view.
- To avoid straining or causing an injury to yourself we request you do not overload yourself. If a load is too heavy, please let the team know so that distribution of items can be re organised.

Attending to Service users

- Be aware of the size of the group and how many people approach a service user, our aim is to help without overwhelming or intimidating a person. In some situations, the lead walker may advise if they would like some walkers to stand back before approaching a service user/s.
- At all times, we intend to provide a polite, non-judgemental and friendly manner. It's good to chat to service users if they want to, to some we may be the first people they have really spoken to that day and this can be a positive help to them.
- Similarly, a service user may not wish to talk, in which case we should respect their needs and give them space.
- Our service users are vulnerable people and **we request walkers not to make promises**, if you agree something with them and you're not able to uphold your end, you could risk doing significant damage to the individual, as well as putting other volunteers or service users at risk. For example, 'I'll bring you some hot food tomorrow' whilst it's likely to happen, there's no way to guarantee it.
- Avoid offering advice or opinions to service users unless you're absolutely certain the information is correct and that it may help. For example, advice on where to sleep or how to get help with money.
- If you feel unsafe in approaching a service user/s please hold off and look to the lead walker for guidance, this may apply to service users who may be 'under the influence'. Or, it could be to do with the environment a service user is in, such as, a poorly lit alley way.
- In the event that you are the focus of any form of aggression from a service user, be calm in response and move away from the situation quickly. The lead walker will support your safety and that of the group, so please ensure the lead is aware of the details.
- 'Don't judge a book by its cover' arises from the growing number of 'hidden homeless' people who use our service. These people can appear smartly dressed and may not initially appear to be homeless.
- In the event that a service user is seriously unwell (not just asleep or intoxicated) please inform the lead walker as it may be deemed necessary to contact emergency services.
- We request walkers not to give money to service users, we aim to be consistent in our work which focuses on the distribution of food, clothes and bedding. We want service users to rely on this rather than anything else.

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We value and recognise the essential work walkers do, on the front line and in representing #feedthehomelessBRISTOL. We thank our walkers for the commitment and dedication in maintaining the standards and in helping our charity organisation to grow and develop. Where possible, #feedthehomelessBRISTOL, aims to work with other like-minded organisations in an effort to promote the interests of the homeless. We welcome any feedback or questions regarding how walks are carried out, please direct these to:

Shada Nasrullah – Head of Walk - 07584 299 207 Gary Webber – Head of Walk – 07767 615 422

Naseem Talukdar – Project Co-ordinator and Trustee naseem@feedthehomeless.org.uk

www.feedthehomeless.org.uk

Charity No. 1169924

info@feedthehomeless.org.uk



Useful links that were referenced in the creation of our Walk Policy and Guidelines include:

www.volunteerbristol.org.uk

www.caringatchristmas.org.uk

www.bristolsouprun.org.uk

www.shelter.org.uk

www.crisis.org.uk

www.feedthehomeless.org.uk

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