

Craig Barton - Senior Media Relations Officer : Tel. 01908 252009

Clair Jackson - Senior Communications and Engagement Officer: Tel. 01908 253091

***Walking Works*: new report reveals how walking can save lives**

Milton Keynes Council's Sports Development Team is calling for people to join them for a local 'Health Walk' after the launch of *Walking Works*, a new extensive review by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support. In the most extensive review of its kind, the report highlights the mounting research and evidence to show how walking can be the answer to the physical inactivity epidemic in England.

Supported by Public Health England, this new report demonstrates that walking is the solution to getting the nation active, and shows how England's largest network of health walk schemes, Walking for Health, is already changing people's lives.

Milton Keynes Health Walks are one of Walking for Health's 600 local schemes across England that organise short, free walks led by friendly, trained walk leaders. There are 15 different adult walking groups all across MK. The groups walk at a variety of pace, to suit walkers of all fitness and ability levels. Walks range from 35 minutes to an hour and take place every day of the week. The scheme has grown over the last eight years and offers fun and social groups for everyone to join and enjoy walking.

Councillor Debbie Brock, Chair of the Milton Keynes Health and Wellbeing Board said: "It's wonderful to read how much walking can do to help people live healthier and happier lives, and how schemes like ours across the country are helping people get more active. We hope people in Milton Keynes will join the health walking groups for a walk, so they can also experience the many benefits of being active."

For more information about local walks, visit: www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/south-east/milton-keynes-health-walks

The report highlights the severe impacts of inactivity:

- Physical inactivity tops smoking as one of the nation's biggest health problems and is one of the top four global killers

- It is responsible for 10.5% of heart disease cases, 13% of type 2 diabetes cases and 17% of premature deaths in the UK
- Being inactive shortens lifespan by 3–5 years
- The associated health problems of inactivity in England are costing the economy up to £10 billion a year

If everyone in England did enough walking to meet recommended guidelines¹ it could prevent:

- 36,815 people dying prematurely
- 294,730 cases of diabetes
- 12,061 people going to hospital for emergency coronary heart disease treatment

The report also highlights how physical activity can help prevent certain type of cancers, help manage the consequences of cancer treatment, and even help reduce the chance of some cancers returning.

Benedict Southworth, Chief Executive of the Ramblers said: “We’re facing a serious crisis of inactivity, but there is a simple solution, Walking for Health is already changing people’s lives in such a positive way, and it has the potential to change many more. We need to see greater investment in initiatives which support and promote walking as the most accessible and affordable way for people to get active.”

Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support said: “It is sad that so many lives are put at risk each year due to inactivity. For cancer patients, being active can help manage some of the debilitating consequences of treatment and can even help reduce the chance of some cancers returning.

“Inactivity is a nationwide epidemic that must be tackled now before it is too late. Healthcare professionals need to ensure that they prescribe physical activity, such as walking, as an intrinsic part of a healthy lifestyle.”

Download a media version of the report or view the full version from
www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkingworks

ENDS

For more information about the Milton Keynes Health Walks contact Vicki Clark on vicki.clark@milton-keynes.gov.uk or 01908 253229 or visit: www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/south-east/milton-keynes-health-walks

For more information on the report call the Ramblers press office 0207 339 8531 or 07584 848083 (out of hours) press@ramblers.org.uk, www.ramblers.org.uk

Or contact Cora Bauer at Macmillan Cancer Support on 0207 091 2016 or at cbauer@macmillan.org.uk

Follow us: Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/healthywalks> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/healthywalks>

Ends