



The weekly 'Moving Forward Together' walking group, takes an intervention-based approach to build trust and relationships with individuals, through walking.

# Walking towards a brighter future through partnership working

## Summary

- **Delivery Area:** HOT Employment
- **Project:** Moving Forward Together Walking Group
- **Partner:** NHS Early Intervention Team
- **Values:** We Care, We Collaborate

Halifax Opportunities Trust (HOT) works with individuals to understand their life and support them in overcoming any challenges that may be preventing them from moving forward.

The HOT Employment team partners with a range of organisations to offer holistic support for people seeking advice and guidance on their employability journey, through activities that subtly link with employment; like walking.



*“I can walk further now, it helped me realise that I can be part of a group and not feel afraid.”*

HOT has partnered with the NHS Early Intervention Team for the Moving Forward Together Walking Group, which takes place every Friday from 11am – 2pm in Halifax.

Over the past 18 months, the walking group has welcomed 30 individuals, with up to ten regular attendees each week, providing a weekly challenge for individuals who have been either referred or invited by HOT or the NHS.

*“Freedom often comes with a price the walking group offers Freedom, and friendships.”*

## Building Relationships

Starting at Halifax Bus Station the group has explored many routes throughout Calderdale, breathing in country air, discovering new places and gaining first-hand experience of the many benefits physical activity can have for well-being. Not only that, but the group offers a relaxed yet safe environment for open discussions, helping individuals to feel welcome and build relationships with fellow participants, volunteers and team members of HOT.

It is through these casual discussions and the relationships built that NHS and HOT teams are able to identify unique cases and work together to offer bespoke support that helps individuals move forward to achieve their goals.

## Reaching Goals

Not only does the group offer a physical challenge for participants, where individuals can reach fitness goals through increased outdoor activity, they can also reach personal goals. Over time, the walks encourage participants to get involved in activities and events they would previously have not thanks to the support and encouragement from their peers.

This has a positive impact on overall well-being, levels of confidence and self-esteem. In some cases, the weekly walks have also led to improved health with medication lowered as a result. All outcomes that can contribute to employability and build skills for employment, further down the line.

*“Coming here on the walks saves me from being alone with my thoughts.”*

## Moving Forward

The walking group unlocks many opportunities for participants to get involved in other initiatives and, can lead to becoming a volunteer within the group as a Walking Leader. This gives individuals a sense of accomplishment and encourages growth, through boosting their confidence and self-belief.

Participants who have joined the group have reported improved confidence, a feeling of belonging and a sense of aspiration, which has led individuals to continue on their employability journey and apply for jobs through the HOT Employment team.

*“I love my Fridays, walking is my happy place.”*



**Impact**

**30 people** supported 

 **Wellbeing** improved