

Motion to General Council – Modification of Walk Leader to Walkers ratio

This General Council believes that the recommended Walk Leader:Walker ratios specified in the Walk Leaders Handbook are too restrictive and are not representative of the actual ratios used by our Walk Leaders. General Council therefore urges the Board of Trustees to carry out a survey of Groups to determine what ratios are successfully used by our Walk Leaders, and to modify the Walk Leaders Handbook to reflect this.

Background:

The Walk Leaders Handbook recommends ratios of leader:walkers of between 1:10 and 1:4 depending on the grade of walk. We feel that these ratios are too restrictive and do not align with current safe walking as practised by the majority of our walk leaders.

It is important that the Handbook reflects actual practice. Some Walk Leaders have concerns that the Ramblers insurance may be invalidated if they are not meeting the ratios in the Handbook and walkers may be concerned that their leader is not meeting the recommendations.

Typically, our leaders appoint a backmarker if the number of walkers gets into double figures upto perhaps 15. The majority of walkers on Ramblers walks regularly walk with the Group, know the local area and the leader is aware of their capabilities and experience. More challenging walks tend to attract more experienced and better-equipped walkers whereas easier walks attract a wider range of abilities. There will be some instances where a lower ratio of leader:walkers is required, such as introductory walks for new members, and walking festivals, and this should be mentioned in the handbook.

We also have been in touch with another walking organisation, who mention similar ratios.

As the UK's biggest walking organisation Ramblers should be relying on its vastly experienced walk leaders' advice on the walk leader:walkers ratio required to deliver walks safely.

Submitted by Oxfordshire Area