

Walkie Talkie – Park Buddy Ethnic Health Forum

Date: May 2026



Ethnic Health Forum (EHF) helped Broughton residents get more active and connected through low-cost group walks in local parks. **Walkie Talkie – Park Buddy supports communities facing racial inequalities to feel confident using green spaces, move more** each week, and build local relationships.

The project mainly supported minority ethnic communities in East Salford (including South Asian, Middle Eastern, Portuguese, Persian and African residents), many newly settled in Broughton. A small number of local English-speaking residents joined as “Park/Walk Buddies” to support welcome, conversation practice and belonging.

Sessions rotated across Broughton parks and play areas (including Albert Park, Clowes Park and Crescent Meadow), helping participants learn routes and feel confident returning with friends and family.

Consultations and drop-ins found common barriers—especially for women—including childcare and cost pressures, safety concerns, low confidence speaking English, and fears linked to rumours or hate incidents. The project addressed these through supported, family-inclusive group walks in familiar local spaces.

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Salford CVS support

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Feedback

UQ is a 30 year old pregnant South Asian British lady who participated in the project and attended the weekend group.

“I really enjoy being part of the walking group. It has helped me stay more physically active, and it's been great for my mood and stress levels. I have definitely felt safer walking in a group of women, and it made the whole experience more comfortable and enjoyable. Overall, I think it's been really positive.”



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How it worked - outcomes

EHF's coordinator and volunteers ran the sessions. Participants registered online via QR code and received reminders; each walk started at an agreed meeting point, included group transport where needed, and built in a short break for water, wellbeing discussion and feedback.

Participants were encouraged to become "Park Champions" to help lead walks and build local ownership. EHF also recruited "Talk Buddies" to support informal English conversation and boost confidence using local parks.

EHF promoted the walks via Broughton WhatsApp groups, multilingual leaflets, social media, weekly drop-ins and mother groups, plus outreach through local schools and places of worship.

The walks improved physical health with participants becoming less sedentary with increased stamina, **and supported mental wellbeing** through time outdoors and peer support. They also strengthened social connections for people new to the area, increased awareness of local green spaces, and improved perceptions of safety through more positive park use.

EHF tracked attendance, repeat participation and feedback gathered during breaks, alongside short stories/quotes and notes from one-to-one support. Social media posts and images helped document engagement and maintain momentum.

The project reduced isolation, strengthened community cohesion and encouraged regular use and care of local green spaces. Practical support, including group transport, also helped reduce cost barriers.

The initiative also increased trust between EHF staff and the community, creating valuable opportunities to raise awareness and engage participants in other EHF programmes. Offering walks at flexible times, including weekly sessions and on weekends, was essential to ensuring accessibility and ongoing engagement.

"This programme has exceeded our expectations in terms of both reach and impact. Although the advantages of group-based physical activity are well recognised in theory, hearing directly from participants intensely illustrated these outcomes. Women participated in various ways- as mothers bringing their children, couples enjoying walks together, and pregnant working women who felt safe, supported, and confident when accessing local green spaces through safe group walks."

**Project Co-ordinator
Ethnic Health Forum**

Next steps

Building on this achievement, their next steps will focus on expanding the program to reach more women, especially those at greater risk of social isolation, while continuing to provide culturally appropriate, safe, and community-led environments that encourage long-term health and wellbeing.