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Walking the Way to Health Wales

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Walking the Way to Health Wales

A report on the evaluation of the Local Project Coordinator and Walk Leader training courses

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A report for the Countryside Council for Wales
November 2006

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1.0 Introduction

The Walking the Way to Health Wales (WW2H) Scheme aims to increase health and well-being by promoting regular exercise through the activity of walking. There is one grant-aided project per county (22 in total), as well as a small number of non grant-aided projects. Over the three years that WW2H projects run, 80,000 people are expected to participate and benefit.

The specific targets of the Scheme are:

- 80,000 people walking who are from areas of poor health or who were previously inactive
- improved health and well-being of participants as a result
- small-scale improvements on the ground to make local areas more accessible and safe for walking
- training and support for every professional and volunteer involved
- the implementation of an accreditation scheme to recognise good quality projects
- the espousal of the WW2H model by the health mainstream in Wales, and receiving mainstream funding from 2006 onwards

The accreditation scheme has not been implemented, nor will be.

The national evaluation provides:

1. data on the volume of activity in the WW2H Scheme
2. data on participants' health and well-being
3. information about processes and management

In this report the results from the evaluation of the Local Project Coordinator and the Walk Leader training courses are presented. Evaluation occurred via a mail out survey, and the questionnaires asked participants about various aspects of the training they had received including the achievement of specific learning objectives, the facilities and resources provided in training, and the quality of the training. The questionnaires were developed by the national evaluation project team in consultation with CCW to ensure that they met the needs of CCW. Copies of the questionnaires are provided in section 5 of this report. These results contribute to the achievement of point three (above) by providing information about the processes and management of the WW2H exercise scheme.

CCW provided the national evaluation team with lists of individuals who had completed either the coordinator or walk leader training courses. The project coordinator training list consisted of the 42 individuals who had completed the training course (i.e., the entire population). The walk leader training list consisted of 79 individuals sampled from the 710 people who had completed the walk leader training. The sample was obtained by taking every 5th name from the training course registers. The individuals on these two lists were sent the appropriate questionnaires by mail and they were asked to return them to the national evaluation team in addressed return envelopes. Participants were provided with bilingual copies of all materials.

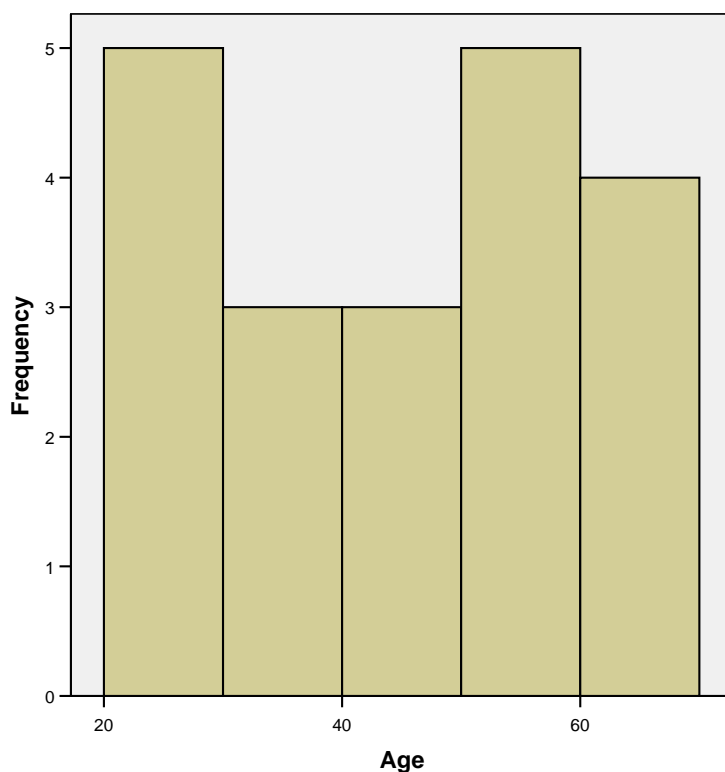
2.0 Findings from the Project Coordinator training questionnaire

2.1 Sample description

Forty two questionnaires were sent out to the individuals who had completed the coordinator training course, and a total of 20 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 48%. A response rate of 48% is higher than typically achieved in mail-out surveys (which is often about 25%). Regarding gender, 85% were females and 15% were males. The average age of the coordinators was 46 years with a standard deviation of 16 years. As can be seen in

figure 1, however, the majority of individuals were either below 30 or above 50, indicating that the participants' ages were not normally distributed. Ten percent of the sample spoke Welsh and 90% did not speak the language. Of participants, 70% completed the training as local project coordinators. Other reasons for completing the training included to (a) support a local project, but not as the coordinator, (b) learn more information for other jobs, and (c) as part of the process of becoming a coordinator. Forty percent believed that the training had been beneficial for reasons in addition to being a coordinator, and such reasons included receiving health information and learning generic project management skills.

Figure 1: A histogram of coordinators' ages in years.



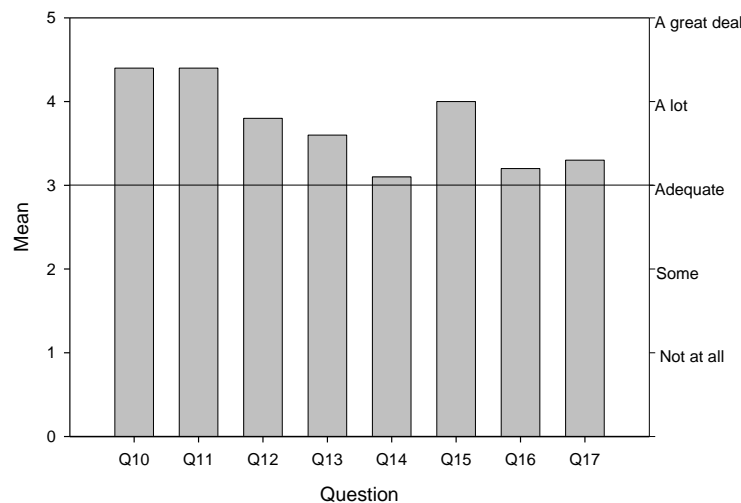
2.2 Coordinators' responses to questions about the achievement of specific learning objectives

Table 1 and Figure 2 present the means for the questions focused on the achievement of specific learning objectives. Participants rated these items according to the following scale: not at all (1), some (2), adequate (3), a lot (4), a great deal (5), or can't remember. Generally, participants believed that they had achieved the learning objectives, at least to an adequate level.

Table 1: Coordinators' responses to questions regarding the achievement of specific learning outcomes.

Question	Mean
<i>During your training course, to what extent do you feel you learned about...</i>	
Q10 The benefits of physical activity and walking for health	4.4
Q11 The national context for Walking the Way to Health Wales	4.4
Q12 Devising, planning, and researching independent walks	3.8
Q13 Promoting independent walks	3.6
Q14 Marketing	3.1
Q15 Managing a programme of led walks	4.0
Q16 Working with a local community	3.2
Q17 Project management and action planning	3.3

Figure 2: Coordinators' responses to questions regarding the achievement of specific learning outcomes.



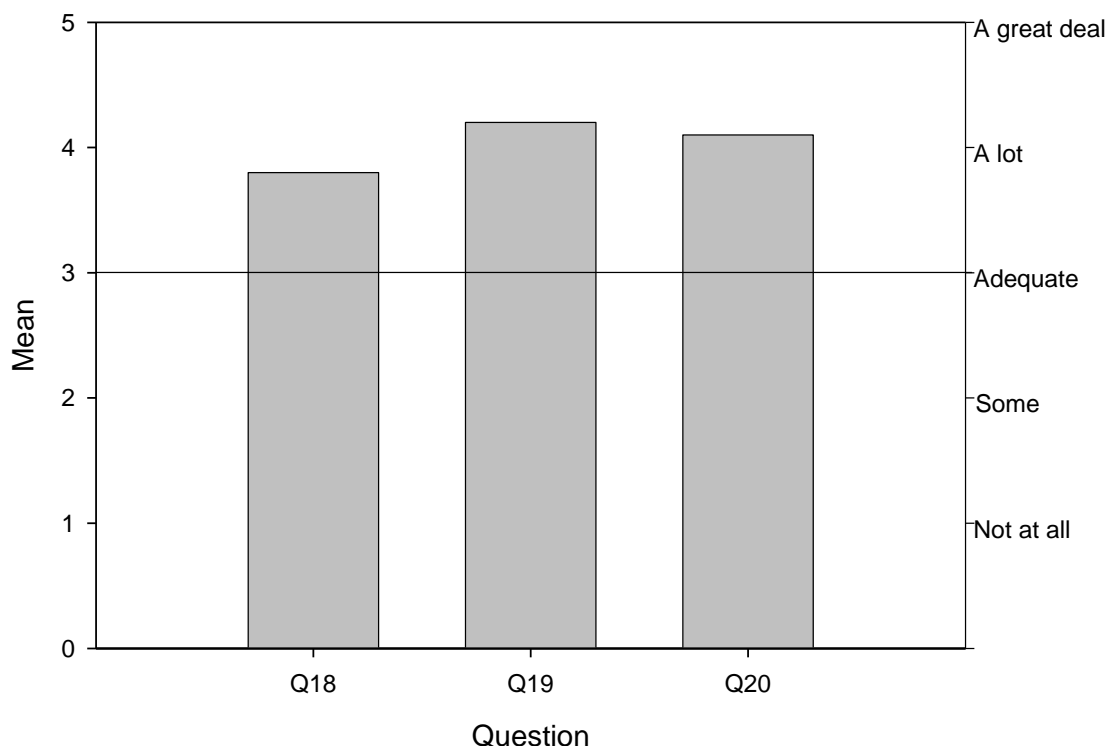
2.3 Coordinators' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available

Table 2 and Figure 3 present the means for the questions focused on where the training occurred and the resources provided. Participants rated these items on the following scale: not at all (1), some (2), adequate (3), a lot (4), a great deal (5), or can't remember. As with the questions above, participants believed that the facilities and resources had been suitable.

Table 2: Coordinators' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available

Question	Mean
Q18 How suitable was the training room?	3.8
Q19 To what extent were appropriate facilities available to help the training?	4.2
Q20 How suitable was the training manual?	4.1

Figure 3: Coordinators' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available



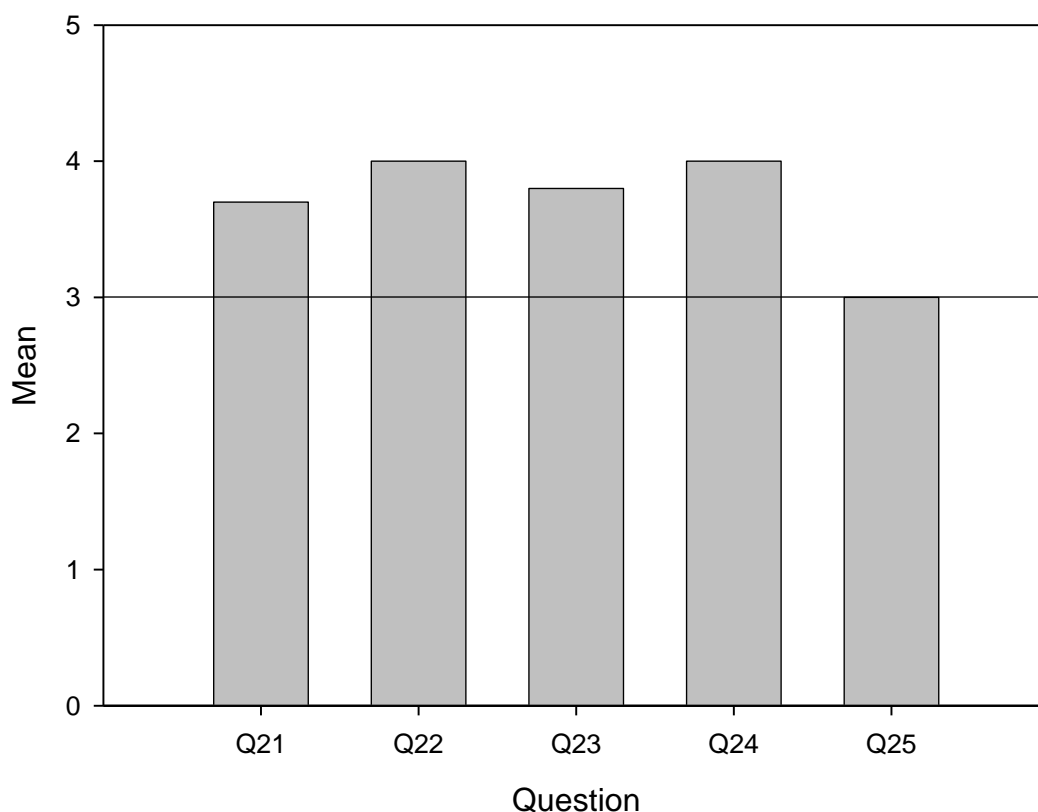
2.4 Coordinators' responses about the quality of the training course.

Table 3 and Figure 4 presents the means for the questions focused on the quality of the training course. Participants responded on a 5-point likert scale that was anchored as illustrated in table 3. A score of 3 would indicate that the course was at least adequately stimulating, useful, etc. Results indicate that participants found the training stimulating, useful, relevant, well-taught, and moderately demanding.

Table 3: Coordinators' responses regarding the quality of the training

Q21	Boring	3.7	Highly stimulating
Q22	Useless	4.0	Highly useful
Q23	Irrelevant	3.8	Highly relevant
Q24	Poorly taught	4.0	Extremely well taught
Q25	Undemanding	3.0	Highly demanding

Figure 4: Coordinators' responses regarding the quality of the training



2.5 Coordinators' responses to the question about the training overall

The mean for the question: "overall, how would you rate the project coordinator training?" was 4.5. Participants rated this item on the following scale: no use (1), some use (2), adequate (3), good (4), very good (5), or can't remember. Results indicate that overall coordinators believed the course was very good.

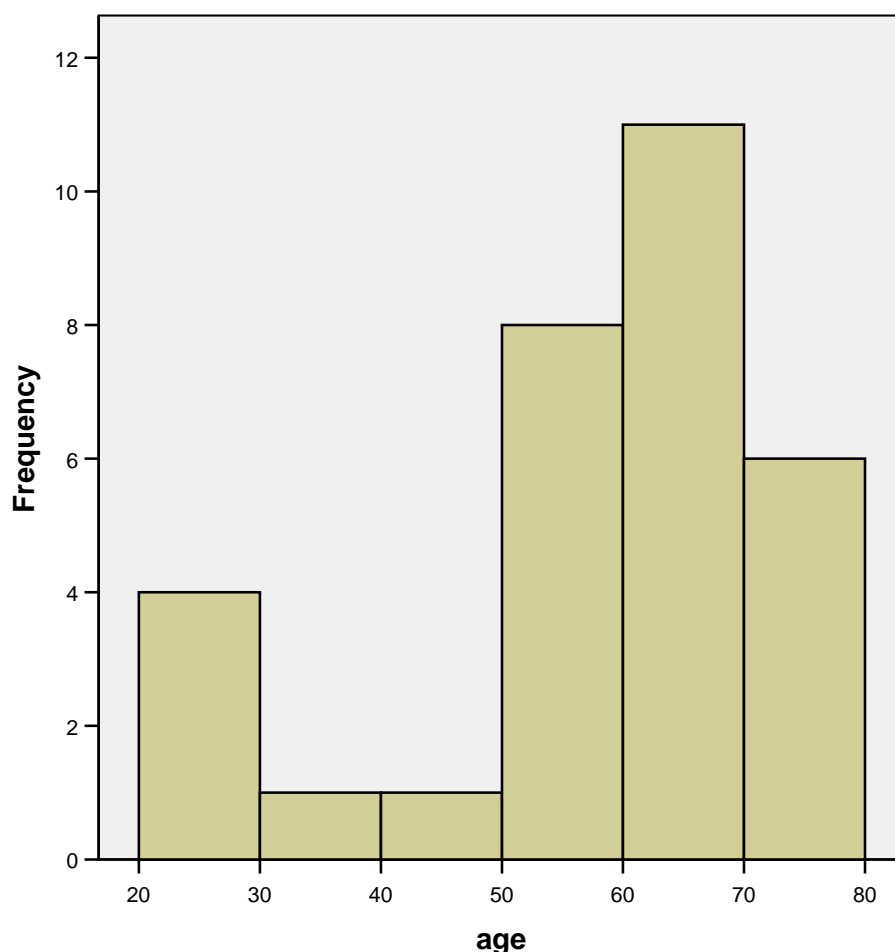
3.0 Findings from the walk leader training questionnaire

3.1 Sample description

Seventy nine questionnaires were sent out and a total of 31 were returned, representing a response rate of 39%, a rate that is higher than typical in mail-out surveys. Regarding gender, 68% were females and 32% were males. The average age of the participants was 57 years with a standard deviation of 16 years. As can be seen in figure 5, 19% of the participants were below the age of 50 and 81% were aged 50 years or above. Regarding language, 13% of the sample spoke Welsh and 87% did not speak the language. Of the sample, 30 individuals completed the training so they could become walk leaders. The one individual who had completed the training for another reason did so for self-development reasons. Every person in the sample had led walks since completing the training. There were 25 people (81%) who were still leading walks and 6 (19%) who were no longer leading walks. The reasons for no longer leading walks included lack of time, lack of need, becoming too old, other commitments, or not being asked. Just over half of the sample (58%) believed the training had been beneficial for reasons in addition to becoming walk leaders, and these reasons included gaining confidence,

meeting people, obtaining health related information, developing positive health related attitudes, helping others, and assisting with other jobs.

Figure 5: A histogram of walker leaders' ages in years.



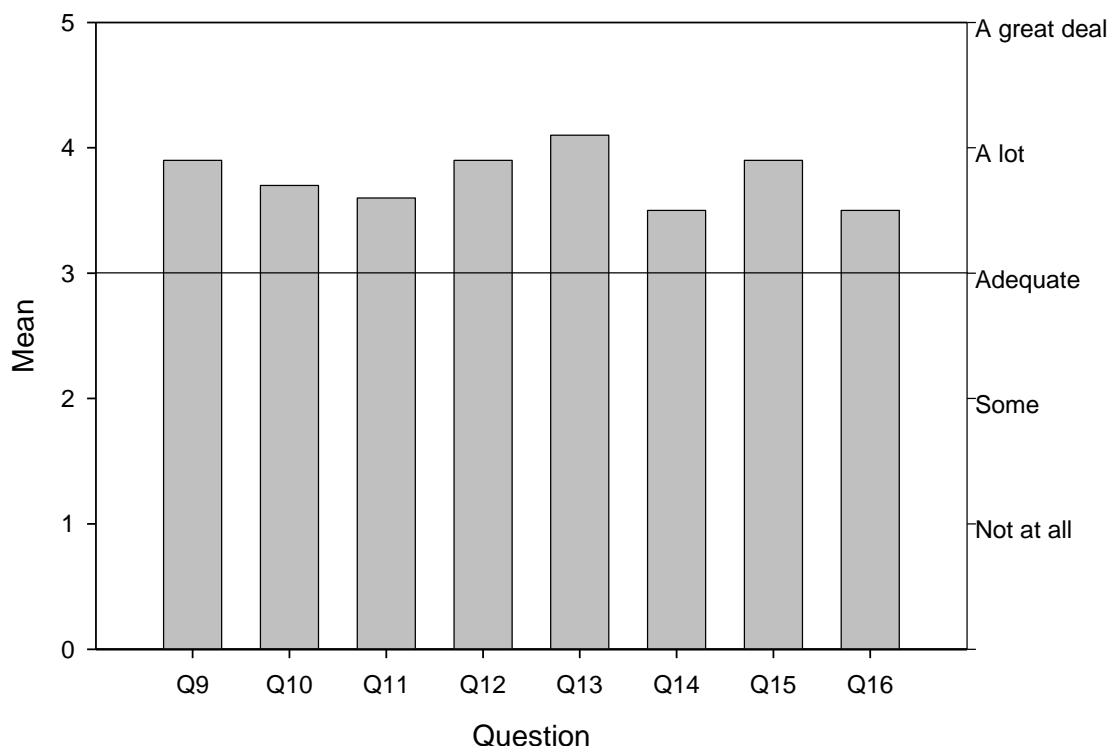
3.2 Walk leaders' responses to questions about the achievement of specific learning objectives

Table 4 and Figure 6 present the means for the questions focused on the achievement of specific learning objectives. Participants rated these items on the following scale: not at all (1), some (2), adequate (3), a lot (4), a great deal (5), or can't remember. Generally, participants believed that they had at least adequately achieved the learning objectives.

Table 4: Walk leaders' responses to questions regarding the achievement of specific learning outcomes.

Question	Mean
<i>During your training course, to what extent do you feel you learned about...</i>	
Q9 The benefits of physical activity and walking for health	3.9
Q10 Identifying barriers to physical activity	3.7
Q11 Motivating people to walk	3.6
Q12 The components of a health walk	3.9
Q13 Safety	4.1
Q14 Special health issues	3.5
Q15 How to lead a walk	3.9
Q16 Essential paper work (e.g., health walk questionnaires and registers)	3.5

Figure 6: Walk leaders' responses to questions regarding the achievement of specific learning outcomes.



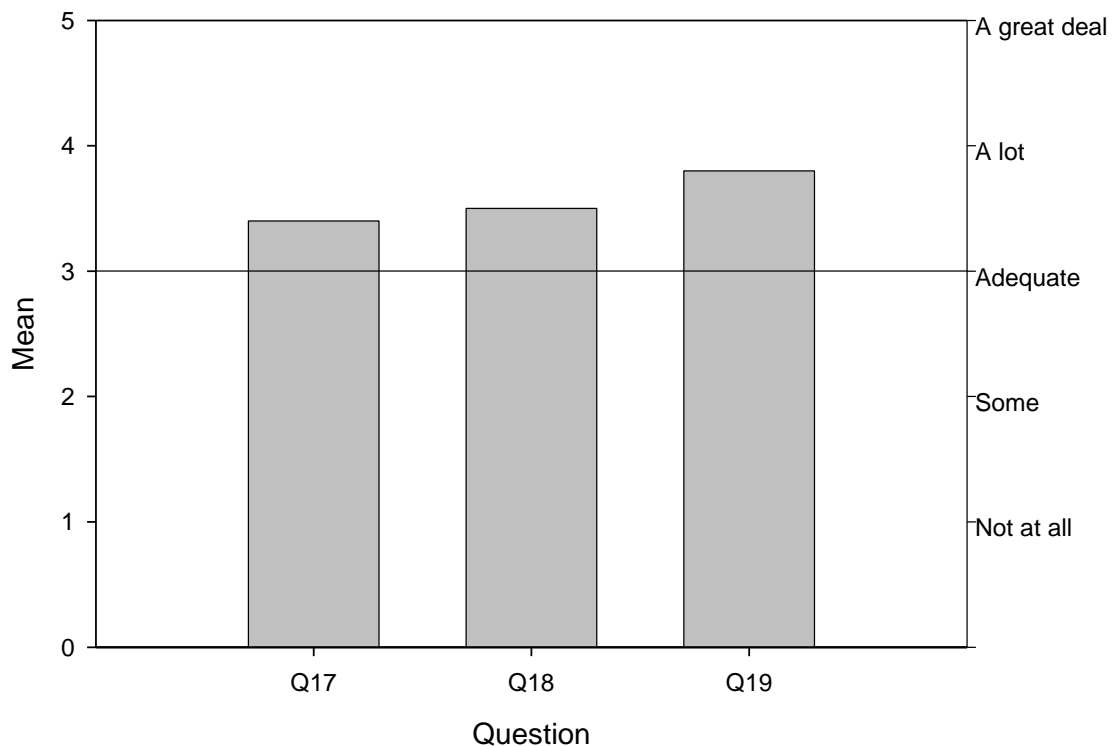
3.3 Walk leaders' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available

Table 5 and Figure 7 present the means for the questions focused on the achievement of specific learning objectives. Participants rated these items on the following scale: not at all (1), some (2), adequate (3), a lot (4), a great deal (5), or can't remember. Generally, participants believed that the facilities and resources had been very suitable.

Table 5: Walk leaders' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available

Question	Mean
Q17 How suitable was the training room?	3.4
Q18 To what extent were appropriate facilities available to help the training?	3.5
Q19 How suitable was the training manual?	3.8

Figure 7: Participants' responses to questions about where the training took place and the resources available



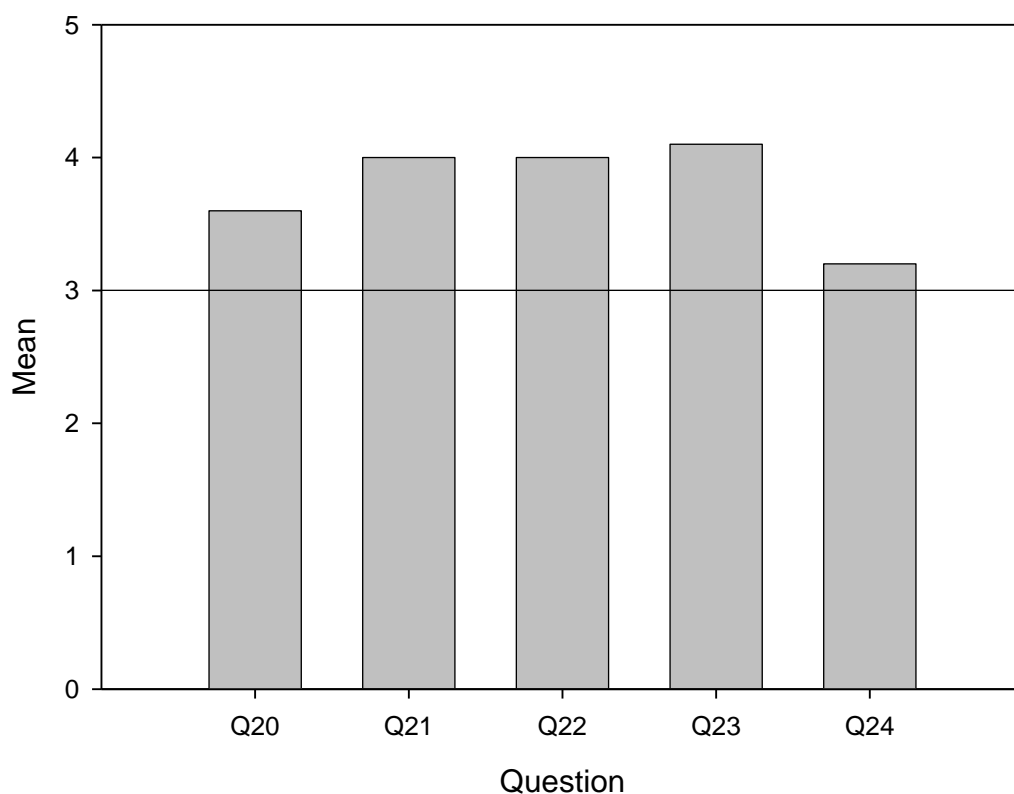
3.4 Walk leaders' responses about the quality of the training course.

Table 6 and figure 8 present the means for the questions focused on the quality of the training course. Participants responded on a 5-point likert scale that was anchored as illustrated in table 6. A score of 3 would indicate that the course was at least adequately stimulating, useful, etc. Responses indicate that participants found the training stimulating, useful, relevant, well-taught, and moderately demanding.

Table 6: Walk leaders' responses regarding the quality of the training

Q20	Boring	3.6	Highly stimulating
Q21	Useless	4.0	Highly useful
Q22	Irrelevant	4.0	Highly relevant
Q23	Poorly taught	4.1	Extremely well taught
Q24	Undemanding	3.2	Highly demanding

Figure 8: Walk leaders' responses regarding the quality of the training



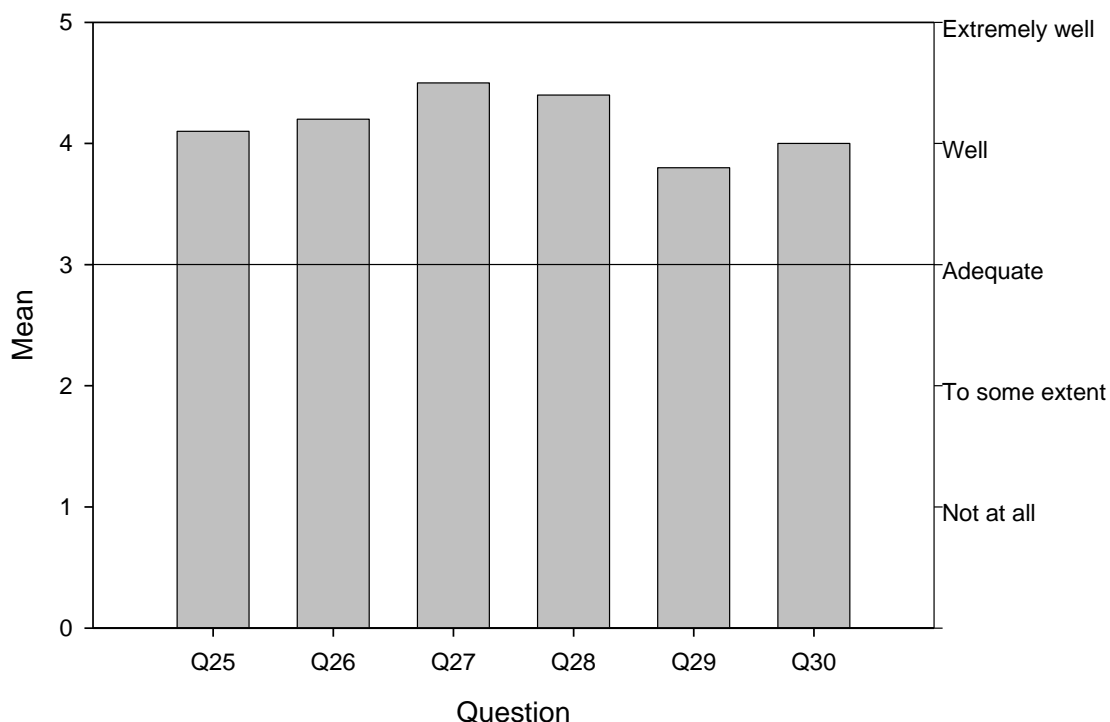
3.5 Walk leaders' responses about the extent to which training helped them develop confidence to complete specific tasks

Table 7 and Figure 9 present the means for the questions focused on the development of participants' confidence to complete specific tasks. Participants responded to the items via the following scale: not at all (1), to some extent (2), adequate (3), well (4), extremely well (5), or can't remember. Overall, participants believed that the training had increased their confidence to complete a number of specific skills.

Table 7: Walk leaders' responses about the extent to which training helped them develop confidence to complete specific tasks

Question	Mean
<i>After training I felt able to</i>	
Q25 Outline the major benefits to be gained by regular walking	4.1
Q26 Lead a walk	4.2
Q27 Outline the role of the leader at the start, during, and at the end of a health walk	4.5
Q28 Recognise potential safety hazards	4.4
Q29 Advise on practical issues such as intensity, posture, clothing, etc	3.8
Q30 Outline the essential qualities of a good walk leader	4.0

Figure 9: Walk leaders' responses about the extent to which training helped them develop confidence to complete specific tasks



3.6 Walk leaders' responses to questions about the training overall

The mean for the question: “overall, how would you rate volunteer walk leader training?” was 4.1. Participants rated this item on the following scale: no use (1), some use (2), adequate (3), good (4), very good (5), or can't remember. Results indicate that overall walk leaders believed the course was very good.

4.0 Summary of results

Compared with the information on those participating in led WW2H walks already collected, the walker leaders appear similar to the participants in terms of age range (i.e., typically over 50) and sex (most are female). The coordinators seem to consist of younger females. Both coordinators and walk leaders believe that the training courses helped them achieve the specific learning outcomes and they were satisfied with the facilities and resources provided. The two samples also found the training stimulating, useful, relevant, well-taught, and moderately demanding. The walk leaders also believed the training had increased their competency in a number of specific skills.

The questionnaires also included open-ended questions that asked participants about the best and worst aspects of the courses, and the topics that should be added or dropped. The lack of consistent patterns from the open-ended questions suggests that there were no aspects that upset participants generally. Regarding the quantitative results, there were no meaningful differences when comparing the results for the quality of the courses with the achievement of specific learning objectives, or when comparing the walk leaders' responses with those of the project coordinators. Any differences were small and overall, there were no items on which the courses were rated as less than adequate. Overall, both samples found the training to be very good. It is not possible to compare these results with those of other training evaluations because the questionnaire used with these individuals was designed to meet the needs of

CCW. Based on these results, however, it seems the course participants were satisfied with their experience.

5.0 Questionnaires



Walking the Way to Health Wales Evaluation Project Co-ordinator Training

The following questions ask about how much your ability to lead a local project was improved by the Walking the Way to Health coordinator training course. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

The following questions ask you to describe yourself. These will help us to describe our sample. The information will not be used to identify individuals. We will not pass your information onto any other person.

Please indicate in the box provided ...

1) Age:

2) Gender: F M

3) Are you a Welsh Speaker? Y N

4) Did you undertake the training to become a project coordinator? Y N

If No please indicate the reasons for undertaking the training

5) Have you been a project coordinator since completing the training? Y N

6) If No please indicate why you haven't been a coordinator.

7) When did you complete your training?
(Month/Year)

8) Has the training helped in other ways
apart from the WW2H project?

Y

N

9) If yes please tell us how you have used the training

The following questions ask about the content of the training course. The third box is labelled "adequate" and this means that the training provided was sufficient to allow you to fulfil the minimum role of a project coordinator. If you felt the training provided you with less, or more, than the minimum needed, then tick the appropriate box.

During your training course, to what extent do you feel you learned about:

10) The benefits of physical activity and walking for health?

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

11) The national context for Walking the Way to Health Wales?

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

12) Devising, planning, and researching independent walks?

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

- 13) Promoting independent walks?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 14) Marketing?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 15) Managing a programme of led walks?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 16) Working with the local community?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 17) Project management and action planning?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

The following questions ask you about where the training took place and the resources available. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

- 18) How suitable was the training room?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 19) To what extent were appropriate facilities available to help the training (visual aids, projectors, flipcharts etc.)?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember
- 20) How suitable was the training manual?
- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

The next questions ask you about the quality of the training course. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 21) Boring | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly stimulating |
| 22) Useless | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly useful |
| 23) Irrelevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly relevant |
| 24) Poorly taught | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Extremely well taught |
| 25) Undemanding | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly demanding |

This section asks you questions about the training overall, and whether anything was missed out.

26) Overall, how would you rate the project coordinator training?

- No use Some use Adequate Good Very good Can't Remember

27) What did you like best about the training course?

28) What did you like least about the training course?

29) Is there anything that should be dropped from the training course?

30) Is there anything that should be added to the training course?

31) To help you in your work as a coordinator, is there any further training you would like?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Should you have any questions about this questionnaire or any other aspects of the Walking The Way To Health Wales scheme, then please contact Dr David Tod (dvt@aber.ac.uk, 01970 628567)



Walking the Way to Health Wales Evaluation Walk Leader Training

The following questions ask about how much your ability to lead a health walk was improved by the Walking the Way to Health walk leader training course. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

The following questions ask you to describe yourself. These will help us to describe our sample. The information will not be used to identify individuals. We will not pass your information onto any other person.

Please indicate in the box provided ...

1) Age:

2) Gender: F M

3) Are you a Welsh Speaker Y N

4) Did you undertake the training to become a walk leader? Y N

If No please indicate the reasons for undertaking the training

5) Have you led walks since completing the training? Y N

If Yes please indicate the number and frequency of led walks

If No please indicate why you haven't led walks since the training.

6) When did you complete your training?
(Month/Year)

7) Do you still lead walks?

Y

N

If No please indicate why you stopped

8) Has the training helped in other ways
apart from the WW2H project?

Y

N

If yes please tell us how you have used the training

The following questions ask about the content of the training course. The third box is labelled "adequate" and this means that the training provided was sufficient to allow you to fulfil the minimum role of a walk leader. If you felt the training provided you with less, or more, than the minimum needed, then tick the appropriate box.

During your training course, to what extent do you feel you learned about.....

9) The benefits of physical activity and walking for health

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

10) Identifying barriers to physical activity

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

11) Motivating people to walk

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

12) The components of a health walk

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

13) Safety

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

14) Special health issues

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

15) How to lead a walk

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

16) Essential paper work, (e.g. health walk questionnaires and registers)

Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

The following questions ask you about where the training took place and the resources available. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

17) How suitable was the training room?

- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

18) To what extent were appropriate facilities available to help the training (visual aids, projectors, flipcharts etc.)

- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

19) How suitable was the training manual.....

- Not at all Some Adequate A lot A great deal Can't remember

The next questions ask you about the quality of the training course. For each question, tick a box which most closely represents how you feel about the training.

- | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|-----|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 20) | Boring | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly stimulating |
| 21) | Useless | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly useful |
| 22) | Irrelevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly relevant |
| 23) | Poorly taught | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Extremely well taught |
| 24) | Undemanding | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly demanding |

The training was designed to help you feel confident as a walk leader. Please rate the extent to which the training allowed you to achieve the following skills.

After the training I felt able to

25) Outline the main benefits to be gained by regular walking

- Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

26) Lead a walk

Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

27) Outline the role of the leader at the start, during and at the end of a health walk

Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

28) Recognise potential safety hazards

Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

29) Advise on practical issues such as intensity, posture, clothing etc.

Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

30) Outline the essential qualities of a good walk leader

Not at all To some extent Adequate Well Extremely well Can't Remember

This section asks you questions about the training overall, and whether anything was missed out.

31) Overall, how would you rate the volunteer walk leader training?

No use Some use Adequate Good Very good Can't Remember

32) What did you like best about the training course?

33) What did you like least about the training course?

34) Is there anything that should be dropped from the training course?

35) Is there anything that should be added to the training course?

36) To help you in your work as a walk leader, is there any further training you would like?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Should you have any questions about this questionnaire or any other aspects of the Walking The Way To Health Wales scheme, then please contact Dr David Tod (dvt@aber.ac.uk, 01970 628567)