



## **20x20 Vision for walking in 2040 from Paul Kelly - Transcript**

Well I'm **Paul KELLY** and I'm calling from Edinburgh in Scotland. I am a researcher in physical activity for health and I have a particular focus on walking and cycling and I'm also a director at Paths for All which is Scotland's national walking charity

Well we seem to have a number of research and related projects on the go. We have recently done some work trying to evaluate the mental well-being benefits of a four week walking intervention. It is run up here in Scotland by Paths for All I and it's called the "Step Count Challenge", where they tried to encourage and support people to collect steps in teams, and see if they can do more steps each week and beat the total for last week and things like that. So we were looking at some of the mental health benefits and it was really quite interesting because through interviews we discovered that it is different things to different people. So for some people it's the increase social interaction, for some people it's being outdoors and enjoy nature, but some people it's just a distraction from maybe the pressures and stresses of work or, you know, things at home. So it is really interesting to see that different people experience mental well-being benefits for different reasons.

We have also done some work looking at how to promote walking more effectively and we compared - we were trying to recruit people for walking groups. We compared the identical adverts one that was had a photo of people walking in nature and another that had a photo of people walking in an urban environment. And of course our hypothesis was that the nature photo would be more effective but actually there was an ever so slight favouring or advantage to the urban image. So that surprised us and we think that maybe this is because, as obviously within Scotland generally more people live in urban environments, especially in the central belt and other towns and cities in Scotland. So it may be that the urban images are more relatable to people and see themselves in them, so to speak. That was quite an interesting piece of work as well.

**So what is my vision for walking in 2040**, well, it's certainly a question that gets you thinking. I would like to think that walking in 20 years time was seen, you know, universally, as the go to approach to promote physical activity at population levels, due to its accessibility and its equity advantages at population levels. I'd like to think that walking was viewed as pleasurable, and as a treat and as a reward, as something people chose to do for leisure, for fun, and that we have created a sort of culture and a society where it was viewed in all these positive ways. And of course that walking, its value to sustainable economies and a sustainable environment, was seen as it is in an even greater light. So I suppose, yeah, it might be a very optimistic wish list but I feel positive that the direction of travel is going in the right way, and that walking is on track to make a greater contribution to populations and society in the coming years.

Well thanks very much and best regards to everyone.