

Your Safety

Each leg will have stewards and trained first-aiders – please familiarise yourself with them.

Please look out for steward's instructions. We need to avoid walking on roads at all times. It is vital that you stick with the march throughout the day, but especially so at busy road crossings, roundabouts and junctions.

The first-aiders will be on hand to help with minor problems such as blisters, but won't be able to supply pain killers – if you feel you may need them, please bring your own supply of paracetamol, antacids, etc.

If you need to take any regular medication please remember to pack this for the day!

Please be alert at all times on the march. Although we have stewards, you are also responsible for your own health and safety and that of your fellow marchers.

If you are bringing your children please be aware that you are responsible at all times for their safety and behaviour.

If you are bringing your dog along, please keep him/her on a lead, and be responsible for clearing up any 'deposits' made along the way. Don't forget that your dog may also need snacks or water too!

At the end of the march

You are responsible for making sure that you and your friends/family get back home after the march. If you are travelling by car you need to think about how you will get back to it. We suggest you have a map to hand, and familiarise yourself with the area especially if you are not marching close to home. Please tell a friend or relative at home that you are coming on the march, and have a back up plan should you not be able to make it home. The local route co-ordinator will be able to inform you further should you need it.

If you are using public transport, please look up timetable details well before the day(s) you come on the march. This is especially important if you are marching at the weekend, or during the August Bank Holiday.

Make sure you have some spare cash and a mobile phone with you - and that it remains charged throughout the day.

You are free to do as you please once the march has done for the day. Many receiving towns and cities are holding rallies in support of our NHS at the finishing point. Some places may also have a social event planned for the evening. Again, if you want to join these you are very welcome. If you are unsure as to what's happening, please check details with the each local co-ordinator.

**PEOPLE'S
MARCH
FOR THE NHS**

**999
CALL
FOR THE NHS**

PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR THE NHS



Guidance Sheet

Thank you for registering for the March.

We appreciate your time and efforts in helping to ensure our NHS is preserved for us, for our children, grandchildren and for future generations.

Some participants will be experienced walkers, others less so. This sheet is intended as guidance to ensure that each day goes smoothly and safely and that it is enjoyable for all concerned.

For your safety and comfort, we suggest you print out a copy and keep it to hand to prepare for your chosen leg(s) of the march.

Know your limits!

Each leg of the route differs in terms of length and terrain. Some legs are short and flat, others longer and hilly. Check out the route you intend doing beforehand. Each leg has its own co-ordinator(s) who live locally. They know their area well, and will have previously checked out the route in detail. All local route and co-ordinator contact information is on the 999 website. They are there to help you, so please contact them for details of the route. There is no such thing as a silly question and we want you to come and enjoy the march so please don't be afraid to ask!

If you are not an experienced walker, or haven't walked a long distance for some time, please don't underestimate how tough and tiring walking can be. We suggest you have a walk "rehearsal" before coming on the march.

Some legs have specific joining and leaving points, but you will be able to join the march at any time along its route. Please let the local co-ordinator know of your plan. If you want to leave the march early, please let the co-ordinator or one of the stewards know.

Please arrive at the assembly point promptly in the morning. We need to ensure we leave on time each day and your safety will be at risk if you try to catch up with the march once it has gone.

Don't get too hot or too cold

The march is taking place in August and September, so hopefully the weather won't be too cold. However, we need to be prepared for all eventualities. Don't be fooled by our weather – it can be brilliant sunshine when you leave home in the morning, but raining hard by lunchtime. Out on the road, a wet body loses heat rapidly – especially from the head, so you need to be prepared.

Clothing

Two or three thin layers of clothing are better than one heavy item. This way you can be more flexible in controlling your body temperature, whether you get too hot or a bit chilly. Make one of your layers a fleece or jumper, and another a waterproof, preferably one with a hood.

Next to your skin, natural fibres such as cotton are best, as are specialist walking garments that 'wick' sweat and moisture away from your body. Layering is an accepted technique amongst experienced walkers for staying warm without getting too hot. Air is trapped in between the layers which keeps you warm, but if you get too hot, removing a layer has the opposite effect.

Avoid heavy types of clothing such as jeans - they can become very uncomfortable when walking a long way, especially if they get wet or the weather is hot.

Let's be optimistic and assume we will have fine weather all the way. Don't forget your sun hat, sun cream, and sun glasses. The last thing we want is for someone to get sunburned!

If you want a 999 t-shirt, please go to 999callforhhs.org.uk/get-a-t-shirt/

Your feet are precious, look after them

The vast majority of the march will take place on footpaths or pavements. This means that the ground surface will be hard, so adequate footwear is important. If you use walking boots, that's fine, but good quality trainers are also acceptable if you prefer. Something with a cushioned sole may help.

Make sure your socks fit well and are not too tight.

To avoid blisters, new footwear should be avoided. Tried and tested is the general rule, and we suggest you try out a walk with the footwear you intend to use on the day – just to check all is Ok and ensure your feet are going to be as comfortable as possible.

It goes without saying, but please don't come equipped just with flip flops or high heels!

Before you come on the march, check that your toenails are not too long or jagged – feet swell when walking long distances, and toes can easily become cut by unruly toenails. After a few miles even the tiniest cut can be extremely painful!

Despite all the precautions, blisters often appear so don't forget plasters, just in case.

Some people prefer a change of shoes and /or socks on a long walk – you may need to consider if you want to do this.

Keep nourished and hydrated

Most legs have shops, cafes or pubs en route, but at some points there will be long stretches without. We also are working to a tight time schedule, especially on some of the longer routes, so stopping for long periods of time will be difficult. You are responsible for making sure you have enough food and drink to last the day.

As well as your favourite drinks, it is a good idea to carry water as well, as this is the most effective way of keeping thirst at bay. You will also need a packed lunch and something to keep you going throughout the day. Energy or cereal bars are excellent for this purpose, as are bananas – but anything you like and find easy to digest will be fine.

We politely ask that you avoid alcohol until the march is over. It will dehydrate you and lower your guard, which will affect your own and other's safety. On a more down to earth note, there will be long periods of time where there are no toilets!

What to carry?

Every long walk entails planning and packing for the day. Please think carefully about what you carry – bring essentials only as you don't want to be too overloaded. A back pack will be more comfortable than a shoulder or carry bag. If you are marching with a friend or group think about sharing items so that you are not carrying too much. Remember to leave space in your pack for items of clothing you may need to remove during the march.