

LEARN. LEAD. INSPIRE.



Mountain
Training
England

Impact Report
Summary 2023

MTE EXISTS TO INSPIRE, ENABLE AND DEVELOP PEOPLE AS WALKERS, CLIMBERS AND MOUNTAINEERS THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND COACHING EXCELLENCE

Welcome to the Executive Summary of the Mountain Training England 2023 impact report.

We last reported on our impact in 2018 and this report examines the effect of the Covid pandemic, our recovery and our impact on the post-Covid sector.

WHO WE ARE

We were established in 1964 to provide *nationally recognised schemes of training and assessment for leaders of groups participating in hill walking, climbing and mountaineering*. Mountain Training England have been educating the people, who educate the whole sector, ever since.

OUR PURPOSE

We enable people from all backgrounds to be active on the hills, crags and climbing walls of the UK. We support a wide sector of professional and voluntary leaders who introduce and inspire millions of participants to exercise safely in these challenging environments. In these times it is ever more important that people should be able to gain the skills and confidence to pursue their own adventures, connect with nature, and enhance their physical and mental wellbeing.

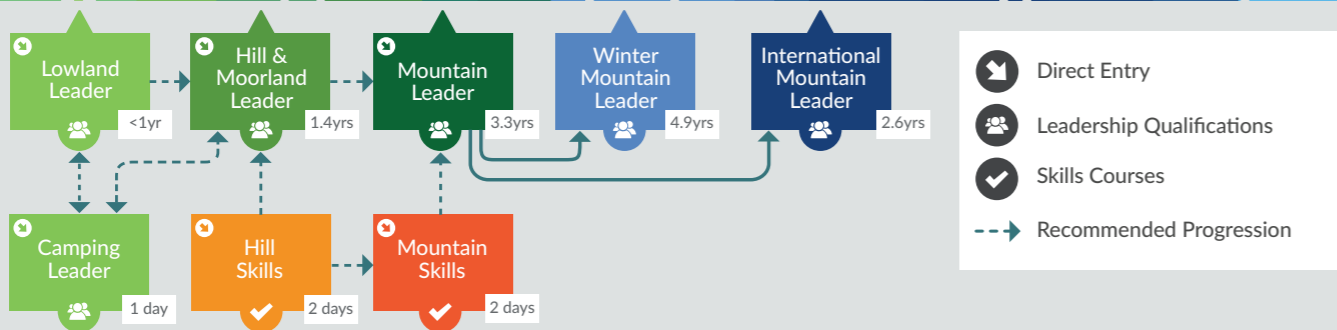
We enable people from all backgrounds to be active on hills, crags and climbing walls of the UK.

OUR TRAINING PATHWAYS

We offer a comprehensive range of courses and qualifications that are recognised by the adventure activity sector and regulated by Ofqual. These range from easy access skills courses to highly committing qualification pathways requiring significant experience and personal development.



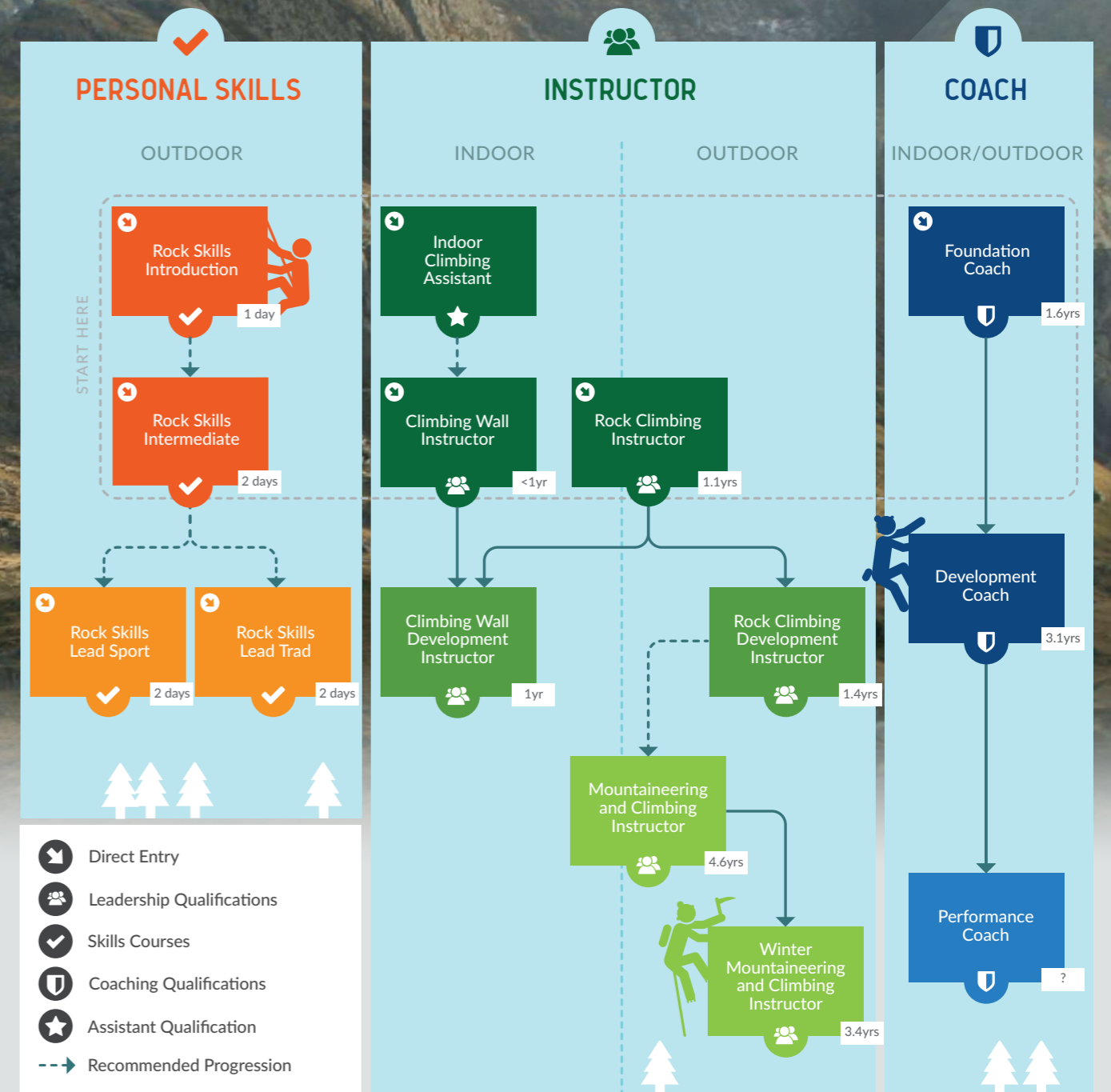
WALKING PATHWAY



Xyrs Median time from registration to passing assessment



CLIMBING PATHWAY



- Direct Entry
- Leadership Qualifications
- Skills Courses
- Coaching Qualifications
- Assistant Qualification
- Recommended Progression

WHAT'S HAPPENED IN OUR SECTOR



Since 1964, and especially in the last decade, we have seen **consistent growth in participation** with 22.9 million people now regularly "Walking for Leisure".

This is the nation's favourite pastime and more people regularly go hill and mountain walking (3.58 million - a 33% increase since 2018) than play football (c.2 million) making it the fifth biggest participation sport in the UK.

We have seen a similar **boom in climbing participation**, with around 1.5 million climbers (278,700 climbing regularly) and c.50% growth in indoor climbing walls since 2018. Association of British Climbing Walls data suggests an estimated 8 million visits to these walls; and over two million people climbing indoors every year. With 0.5 million U18 and 150,000 adult supervised climbers, Mountain Training has an important role in educating the people that inspire, deliver, or enable this participation.

CONSISTENT GROWTH IN PARTICIPATION

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING

Since 1964 Mountain Training has registered over **195,000 candidates** on all schemes, with MTE having registered 163,000 of these.

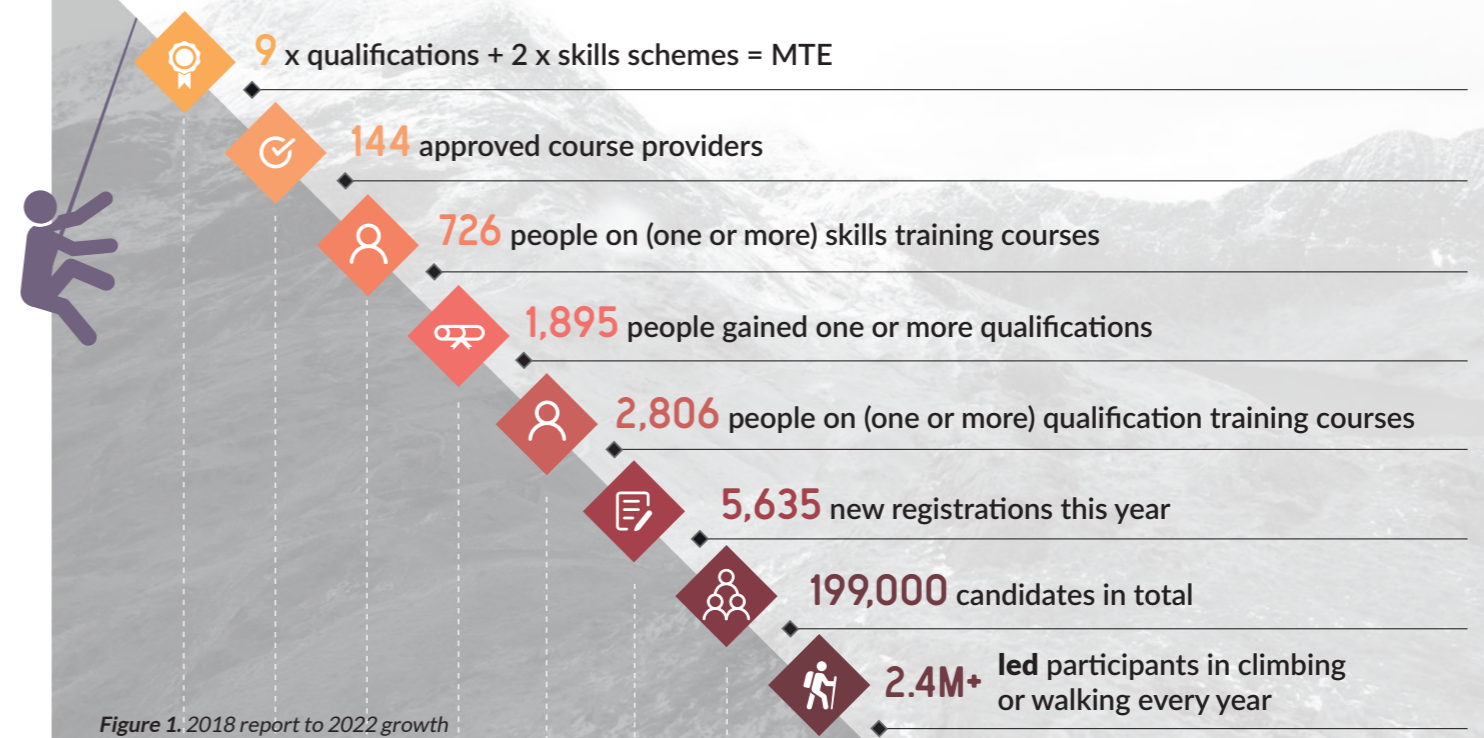
MTE currently approves 144 Providers and 254 Course Directors to train and accredit leaders, instructors and coaches through nine qualification schemes and two skills training schemes for rock climbing and hillwalking, throughout England. In the past 12 months (2021-22 financial year):

- 5,635 people registered on a scheme (or more than one). This is **an increase of 939 (20%)** per year on the previous report in 2018
- 726 people completed a skills training course (or more than one)
- 2,806 people completed a qualification training course (or more than one)
- 1,895 people gained one or more qualifications



Mountain Training
England

DIRECT IMPACT



* MTA membership (arguably the most current and active candidates) now stands at 9,000 members, reporting an average of 267 participants per candidate = **at least 2,403,000 led participants this year**. There are many more active candidates who are not MTA members.

THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, saw overall activity levels fall for a period, whilst others rushed outside for their exercise. This put the great outdoors on the radar, and (with an 85% increase for OS Maps App downloads) in the social media feed, of a whole new demographic. Accordingly, in the short term we saw a spike in walking for leisure, but a temporary cessation of led activities as outdoor centres and indoor climbing walls were closed:

- Each day over 70,000 under 18s and 20,000 over 18s were missing out on valuable outdoor learning experiences.
- 70% of organisations experienced cancellation of the vast majority of their outdoor contracts.
- 42% of outdoor centres expected to close within 6 months.
- 25% of our survey respondents had to find alternative sources of income.
- The sector lost many centres; many freelance/seasonal outdoor instructors; and we qualified over 2000 less coaches and leaders during the Covid-19 years of 2020/21

Impressively, participation in activity, as well as scheme registrations, have both returned to the pre-pandemic projections for sustained growth, but with some lasting changes:

- We now have an older, and more diverse population enjoying the outdoors, as reflected in our survey:
 - 58% report some of their participants are 65yrs or older, with 30% regularly engaging with this age group.
 - Whilst 55% of our candidates frequently work with 11-17yr olds (mostly in youth groups and in an educational setting) this age group has shown the greatest decline since the last survey. This fits with the slow decline in young adult activity in the Active Lives Survey; and the recent cuts and closures of education centres.
- 95% felt that the ethnic diversity of their participants had remained the same (79%) or increased (16%).
- 96% felt that the gender diversity of their participants had remained the same (80%) or increased (16%).

On balance, the majority of our candidates now feel that demand for their services has grown since the pandemic; and that their future income from outdoor activity is sustainable, at least in the short term.



THE MTE STRATEGY

This study shows that we have more leaders, being more active, more often; but the type of activity has changed.

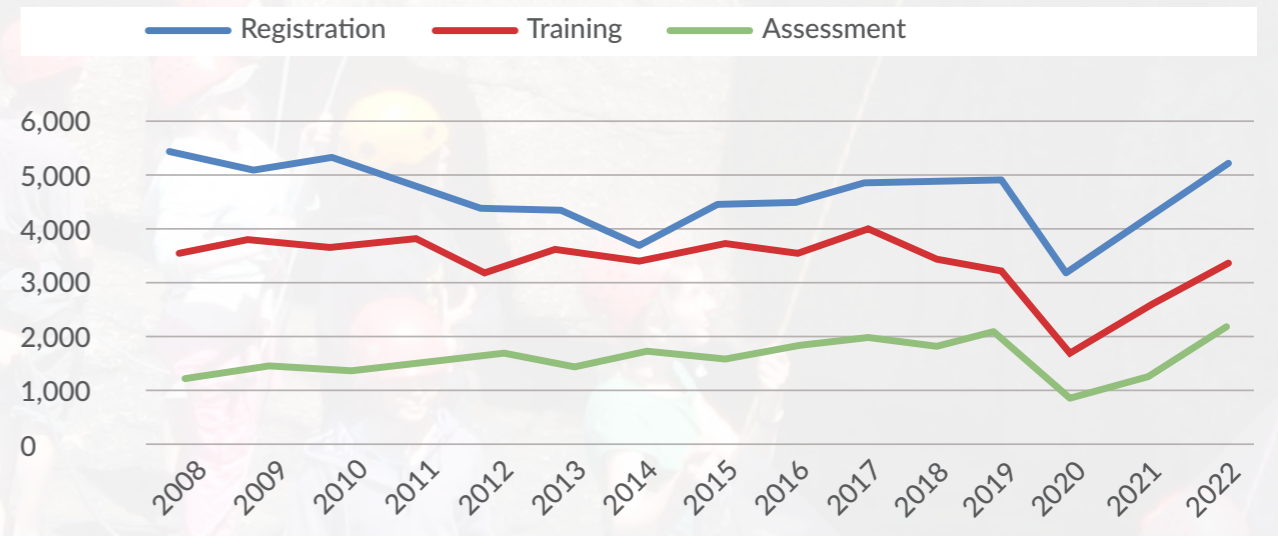
Against this challenging and evolving backdrop, Mountain Training England are proud to have achieved the following headlines against our key strategic aims in the past year:

1 THE TRAINING PATHWAY

- We completed our Walking Awards Review with the implementation of a new leadership model and introduction of the Camping Leader qualification. This new qualification is more accessible and flexible with digital training. So far...
 - 823 people have registered in total, 363 in 2022.
- We have updated the skills course delivery model, reviewed the Rock Climbing Development Instructor and have developed a new indoor bouldering qualification.
 - 49% of the indoor coaching workforce hold Mountain Training qualifications.
- We completed the Your Movement Matters research project, the latest MTA survey and have commissioned this post Covid-19 impact report.

This broader offer fits the wider diversity of candidates; and more inclusive training means we are now qualifying nearly twice as many candidates having listened to the sector and the market since 2008.

TOTAL QUALIFICATIONS



2 QUALITY PROVISION

- 98% of people were extremely or somewhat satisfied with their training course; 97% were extremely somewhat satisfied with the delivery of their assessment course.
- We have developed and delivered cpd for providers on inclusion and assessment skills and ran a successful provider conference in 2022.
- We have employed a Digital Learning Officer who is developing new resources for candidates, including our first online training for the Camping Leader.
- We maintain high standards of good practice, continuing to meet tier 2b governance requirements.
- Working closely with key partners, we have taken steps to provide even better safeguarding guidance, requirements, resources and support for our providers and candidates alike.
 - This has enabled us to implement a holistic Safeguarding policy covering Children and Adults with all providers.
 - All of our course providers now have a safeguarding policy in place.

3 SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY

- We secured Sport England funding until 2027 to deliver our strategy.
- We weathered the pandemic supporting our providers with reduced fees. After two years of running budget deficits the organisation now runs a balanced budget.
- In our strategy, we aimed to create three new pathways with partners. So far we have established joint initiatives with the Royal British Legion, Black Girls Hike, and Black Dog Outdoors.
- We have reduced our carbon footprint with increased digital meetings and training and established a lift share facility for candidates with the BMC. Our strategic aim was to reduce travel by 25% from 2019 levels. This has already been exceeded.
- We have established a partnership with Cotswold Outdoors to support and promote our skills courses.

4 SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

- We have developed and implemented our Mountain Training gender equality strategy:
 - Aiming to increase female qualified leaders by 10% from 2019 levels (there were 487 in 2019 and 527 in 2022) this represents an 8.2% increase already.
 - We now have 13 new female Course Directors approved by February 2023.
 - The “Women in Mountain Training” conference at Plas y Brenin in October 2022 sold-out and showcased the huge potential of female leaders with 91 participants.
 - We have made great progress over the years with 35% of all our qualifications being awarded to women in 2022 (up from 28% in 2018).
- The number of candidates from all ethnic groups other than white (combined) has doubled since the last report. This accounts for 6% of candidates now, against a very low baseline.
- We established our Skills and Training Fund for ethnic minorities, and our Disability fund.
- We published national qualification matrices for leaders and advisors, establishing more inclusive definitions of competency and more inclusive Course Director requirements.
- We have engaged with the voluntary sector to recruit more diverse skills course providers e.g.: Black Girls Hike, Royal British Legion, Climb2Recovery and Black Dog Outdoors.

5 PROMOTING OUR MISSION

- We co-authored our manifesto on hillwalking with the BMC and Plas y Brenin for Sport England.
- We developed our skills course marketing plan, including the partnership with Cotswold Outdoors, engaging the voluntary sector. We have subsequently seen growth in skills course attendance of around 100%.
- We have developed new and existing partnerships to promote our schemes e.g.: NNAS, Harvey Maps, Outward Bound, Slow Ways, Cicerone, Scouts infographics, All the Elements communications project to diverse groups, AdventureSmartUK.
- We created a ‘Get Climbing’ campaign with the BMC and partners. The strategic aim to create a similar ‘Get Walking’ campaign has been delivered through the BMC Hillwalking site.
- We appointed two new ambassadors; Rhiane Fatinuken MBE of Black Girls Hike and Rehna Yaseen of the Lindley Educational Trust.
- We attended many events such as Ten Tors, Keswick Mountain festival, ABC conference, IOL conference, OEAP conference, Trad Fest - to promote good practice and our qualifications.

WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY SEEN GROWTH IN COURSE ATTENDANCE OF AROUND 100%

THE 2023 CANDIDATE SURVEY

Our candidates are our qualification holders and trainees.

Once again, we completed a survey of candidates to discover the "Indirect Participation Data" and over 1,400 candidates told us what they do with our qualifications and for whom:

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Post pandemic participation demographics have all radically improved for diversity. **It will take a while for this to feed through to our candidates/workforce.**
- Ethnicity has increased in participation. Percentage of "numbers" is increasing for us (against a tiny baseline).
- 16% felt that the ethnic diversity of their participants had increased
- Gender split is now 50:50 male to female in participation and starting to show in workforce (especially indoors)
- 16% felt that the gender diversity of their participants had increased.
- Sexual orientation is incredibly positive and diverse compared to the national population average.
- 58% report some of their participants are 65yrs or older, with 30% regularly engaging with this age group.

WHO OUR CANDIDATES WORK WITH

Our candidates are doing less work with young people and less in an educational setting.

- Frequency of work with 11-17yr olds has shown the greatest decline since the last survey.
- Likewise, candidates are working less with schools and within education.
- This is significant - as it aligns with ALS decline for youth activity over the past years.
- Universities and colleges have dropped from 24% to 20%;
- LEA centres dropped from 26% to just 15%;
- Private outdoor centres from 25% to 18%;
- 58% of our candidates use their qualifications for the benefit of Youth Groups and Charities and 51% of all their participants are new to the activity. This remains roughly consistent with 2018.

45% of our candidates use their Mountain Training skills and qualifications as a Manager, Policy Maker, Technical Advisor or Competent Person for key organisations. This is up (by 25%) on 36% in the previous 2018 survey.

HOW CANDIDATES USE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS

- 36% work as freelancers/self-employed
- 25% work as full and/or part time employed
- 33% work as volunteers

978 of our respondents had volunteered 29,125 times in the past year. This is an **average of 30 days per candidate** (up from 19 in the previous survey) and they volunteer more often, with 69% of respondents volunteering regularly. This suggests that (overall) **Mountain Training candidates will volunteer an amazing 5.85 million times each year.**

With cutbacks, closed centres and lasting changes in delivery mechanism, the traditional access to the outdoors and nature literacy (e.g. the Countryside Code) through outdoor education has changed for the next generation. As a result, with more online sessions, shorter sessions, smaller groups, and less working for schools and LEA centres, our candidates have logged less distance.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A LEADER, COACH OR INSTRUCTOR

When we asked our candidates about the benefits of being a leader, coach or instructor, those who **agree/strongly agree**:

- 90% It keeps me physically active (contribution to activity agenda)
- 79% feel a valuable member of a team (good for their social well-being)
- 64% feel part of a valuable network of leaders, coaches and instructors
- 78% feel better about myself as a consequence (great for their mental well-being)
- 86% feel more confident in my skills and enjoyment of the activity.
- 82% enjoy my own participation in the activity more as a result (sustaining activity & participation in activity for our candidates as well as their clients)

If we can help 80% of our overall candidates stay active, feel better about themselves, enjoy their own activity even more, whilst feeling like a valuable member of a team, that suggests these important benefits are gained by about 160,000 people each year.

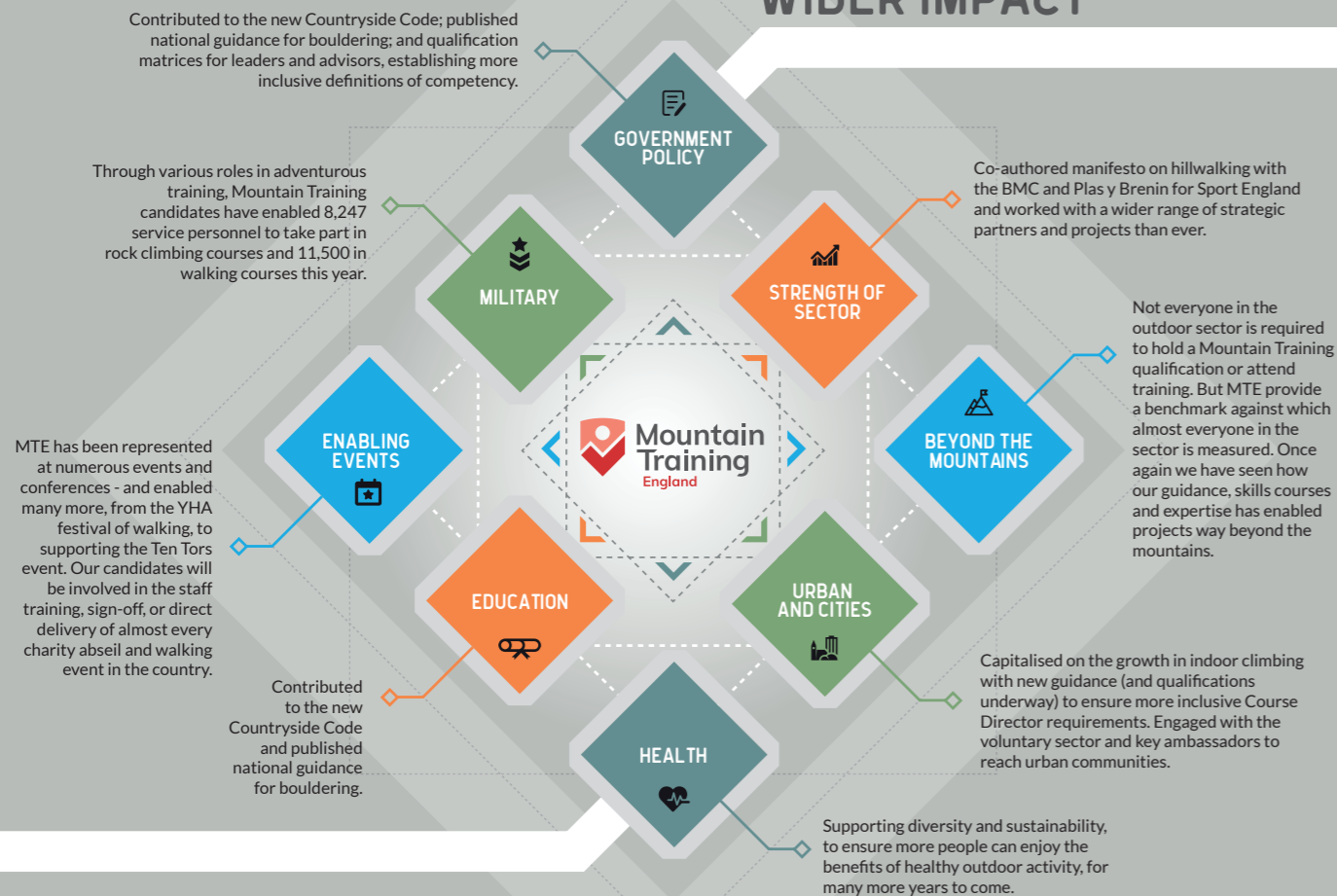
MTE'S WIDER IMPACT

Mountain Training provides a benchmark against which almost everyone in the sector is measured.

For Mountain Training England, this reaches out to lowland activities, inner city climbing walls, and way beyond the mountains. By providing guidance, and the skilled expertise to apply it, we deliver a far wider impact than most would realise.

MOUNTAIN TRAINING PROVIDES A BENCHMARK AGAINST WHICH ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE SECTOR IS MEASURED

WIDER IMPACT



For further details see our full 2023 Impact Report by Martin Chester.





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