



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

This reports on the activities and outputs referenced against MTS operational priorities in 2024/2025 as defined in the MTS Strategic Development Plan 2022 to 2026

Mountain Training Scotland is the Scottish awarding body of the national recognised Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes, and part of the national Mountain Training organisations network.



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Mountain Training Scotland Annual Report 2024-2025

[Mountain Training Scotland](#) is a Scottish based charitable body whose purpose is the advancement for the public benefit of education and training (in conjunction where appropriate with other persons or bodies) in the skills required for doing, leading, and instructing safe hill, mountain, moorland, and countryside walking, mountaineering and rock, ice and indoor climbing, and other associated activities, and to offer advice on matters of training and safety.

This report summarises the core activities, achievements and progress towards priorities identified in the Mountain Training Scotland Annual Plan and Budget 2024–2025 and the [Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#).

The support given by [sportscotland](#) who each year invest in Mountain Training Scotland to support our development projects is especially noted with thanks. Without this investment we would be extremely limited in the development projects we could undertake.

The capacity to undertake these projects, activities and related outputs documented in this report would also not be possible without the support of our [strategic partner organisations](#), the [Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members](#), our Providers, their course Directors, Tutors and staff, and the combined and collaborative efforts of a vast number of people all of whom share our vision and ethos. Mountain Training Scotland would like to thank you all.



Mountain Training Scotland is a company registered in the UK no SC215532;

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC031047.

About Mountain Training Scotland

Mountain Training Scotland is one of five Mountain Training organisations awarding bodies, within the UK and Ireland. It works closely with the central co-ordinating body, Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland, to develop and manage a portfolio of nationally recognised mountain-related¹ skills training and qualification schemes under the collective brand name of 'Mountain Training' ensuring parity and consistency of delivery across all five national Mountain Training organisations.



Mountain Training Scotland is a limited company registered in the UK with charitable status. Mountain Training Scotland is managed by a [Board of volunteer Directors](#) elected by and reporting to a Council of Members of Mountain Training Scotland. Members are nominated representatives of Scottish-based organisations with a strategic interest in and commitment to the Mountain Training qualification schemes. Collectively the Board and the Council of Members are referred to as 'Mountain Training Scotland.'

A full-time paid [Executive Officer \(supported by a part-time Administration and Finance Assistant and a part-time Technical Officer\)](#) is responsible for the day-to-day operational management and interaction with Mountain Training UK and Ireland, whilst reporting directly to the Board.

Mountain Training Scotland's Purpose

Mountain Training Scotland is a Scottish based charitable body whose purpose is the advancement for the public benefit of education and training (in conjunction where appropriate with other persons or bodies) in the skills required for doing, leading, and instructing safe hill, mountain, moorland, and countryside walking, mountaineering and rock, ice and indoor climbing, and other associated activities, and to offer advice on matters of training and safety.

The Mountain Training personal skills training schemes are used by a wide range of people seeking to develop their personal skills and confidence. Whilst the Mountain Training qualification schemes are undertaken and used by volunteers and outdoor professionals leading and teaching individuals and groups in a variety of contexts. These Mountain Training qualified leaders, instructors and coaches support a wide range of participation, in a variety of mountain-related activities, from a variety of groups with the resultant physical, wellbeing and social benefits.

¹ The phrase, 'mountain-related' is used throughout the text. This should be read as referring to all of the activities listed: hill and mountain walking, rock climbing and scrambling, bouldering, indoor climbing, winter climbing, mountaineering, Alpine mountaineering and ski mountaineering.

Similarly the work of Mountain Training Scotland covers a range of qualifications for qualified individuals who are in positions of responsibility working with individuals/groups. In this document the following terms are used:

Leaders – a generic term for candidates who hold one or more of the Mountain Training walking qualifications, for example Lowland Walking Leader and who use their qualification to lead groups.

Instructors – a generic term for candidates who hold one or more Mountain Training climbing qualifications and use their qualification to supervise/teach/instruct groups.

The Mountain Training network – ‘Our Vision, Mission, and Ethos’

LEARN. LEAD. INSPIRE.

OUR VISION

A diverse and active outdoor society, supported by inspirational leaders, instructors and coaches.

OUR MISSION

To inspire, enable and develop people in walking, climbing and mountaineering through the provision of nationally and internationally recognised skills training and leadership qualifications.

OUR VALUES

Our values define how we approach our work. These values influence what we are trying to achieve and how we expect our award holders to operate.

WE BELIEVE IN:

THE POWER OF INSPIRATION

Inspiring people to enjoy walking, climbing and mountaineering with confidence and skill.

SAFE PRACTICE

The safe enjoyment of walking, climbing and mountaineering. We disseminate guidance on good practice and provide training and qualifications for participants, instructors, leaders and coaches.

QUALITY TRAINING

High quality training and assessment delivered by experienced and supportive practitioners.

SELF-RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Developing independent walkers, climbers and mountaineers who practise and encourage sustainable and sympathetic use of the outdoors by all users.

INCLUSION

Supporting equal access to our sport for people from all backgrounds. We also believe that all people have the potential to develop leadership and coaching skills.

INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT

Good leadership is about more than decision making and technical skill; it is also about supporting and developing individuals.

“GREAT LEADERS
CREATE MORE
LEADERS, NOT
FOLLOWERS.”

ROY T. BENNETT





Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan Overview

Our Intent

Our intent is to enhance Mountain Training Scotland's position as a resilient and financially secure organisation providing innovative and sustainable mountain-related personal skills training and qualification schemes to help develop and support a community of outdoor leaders, instructors and coaches, representative of a diverse and active society. The successful implementation of our strategic plan will see us well on the way to achieving this goal by 2026.

The implementation of this strategic plan is detailed in our annual operational plan, which sets specific actions, targets and timelines for completion. The annual operational plans are managed on an ongoing basis and adjusted each year according to progress against the four-year strategic plan.

Our Values and Principles

Values

There are four values underpinning the work of Mountain Training Scotland. They are:

- Equitable
- Innovative
- Collaborative
- Resilient

Principles

The five principles based on our values will underpin the delivery of this strategic plan:

- Mountain Training Scotland is open, welcoming, and accessible to all with a shared interest in mountain-related activities.
- We encourage diversity and seek to remove barriers to individuals' and others' involvement and participation as leaders and instructors of mountain-related activities.
- We support and encourage sustainable and sympathetic use of the outdoors by all users.
- Mountain Training Scotland is innovative in the development of our work practices and creation of development projects.
- Mountain Training Scotland is outward thinking and seeks to work in collaboration with key partners and relevant organisations to fulfil our strategic aims.

Planned Key Strategic outputs 2022-2026

Strategic Aim 1

‘To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’

- Increase the resilience of both provider networks and candidate pathways.
- Develop new methods for resilient training delivery.
- Improve the frameworks supporting an effective community of practice.
- Strengthen collaboration with partner organisations.
- Embed and promote the principles of sustainable practice across personal skills training and qualification schemes.

Strategic Aim 2

‘To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’

- Identify and monitor areas of under-representation.
- Work towards removing barriers to inclusion in personal skills training and qualification schemes.
- In collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland and identified third sector partners promote and support greater participation from under-represented groups in training and qualification schemes.
- Promote diversity and inclusion externally as core values of MTS.

Strategic Aim 3

‘To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland’

- Augment current financial stability and operational ability and capacity.
- Develop greater financial resilience against exogenous shocks.
- Ensure operational stability and relevance in the post-pandemic environment.

Our Key Strategic Outcomes by 2026

Strategic Aim 1

'To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland'

- a 10% increase in led days by qualified Mountain Training leaders and instructors from 78,631 to 86,484 led days.
- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland and MTUKI ensured that the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes meet the changing needs of Scottish based mountain-related activity participants at all experience levels.
- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland continued to support the development of an infrastructure of qualified personal skills training providers in Scotland.

Strategic Aim 2

'To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland'

- facilitated a 100% increase in registrations from candidates from ethnically diverse communities' backgrounds from an average of 12 per year to an average of 24 per year by 2026.
- facilitated an increase in registrations by female candidates across all Mountain Training qualifications in Scotland from 35% of total to 40% of total.
- increased total MTS registrations by 10% from an average of 1420 to an average of 1562.

Strategic Aim 3

'To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland'

- ensured Mountain Training Scotland's income increased by at least minimum annual inflation rate (based on the Retail Price Index).
- ensured that the MTS Provider annual fee met cost of minimum moderation requirements (as defined in operational plan)
- ensuring the Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan and associated annual operation plans and associated outcomes are regularly reviewed and updated as required to reflect current economic and political realities and is aligned with sportscotland national outcomes.



Mountain Training Scotland's Chairperson's Foreword

Against a challenging financial year, Mountain Training Scotland has had a busy and successful period. Delivery of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is progressing well with a number of goals already exceeded.

The Mountain Training Leadership and Decision-Making competencies framework has been extended offering consistency across nearly all schemes ensuring that the same quality of leadership can be expected from all our accredited courses and we are excited for the launch of the Bouldering Wall Instructor Scheme.

A challenging winter both weather and conditions wise has been navigated successfully with providers and Mountain Training Scotland working together to ensure that the majority of courses were able to be successfully delivered safely.

Of note is progress on inclusion across a number of bases. There are steady steps in the percentage of female approved course directors and tutors overall, most notably within Lowland Leader where we have one in five course directors being female. Whilst this has some way to catch up with the amazing three in five candidates being female, it is very positive to see this trend.

Overall it is positive to note that we now have 35% of registrations across skills schemes and qualifications being female, broadly in line with sector partners indication that participation is leading through to greater representation in qualifications.

The percentage of candidates from Black, Asian and African communities continues to increase but we recognise there is need for an ongoing commitment to support and engage this community. In addition, we are delighted to note broader representation across candidates with a wider range of reasonable adjustments being supported. This indicates that the providers and training is inclusive for neurodiverse participants and broader health conditions including some with different physical abilities.

As you will read in the treasurer's report however, registrations are down. This comes amid high inflation in 2023/2024, requiring us to raise costs, coupled with some candidates/organisations having less disposable income for skills and qualification schemes." To address this we are delighted to have increased the maximum available bursary per candidate to offer better support. However this backdrop has led to a challenging financial situation which Mountain Training Scotland are looking to actively manage through the final year of the current strategy and beyond.

I want to recognise George McEwan, our Executive Officer who works tirelessly to deliver a significant and varied programme of work to ensure the key outcomes for Mountain Training Scotland are successfully delivered. He is ably supported by our contracted Technical Officer Sandy Paterson and Administration Assistant Catherine Rose to whom we are very grateful.

In addition, our thanks go to Sport Scotland for their continued support and investment in Mountain Training Scotland as an awarding body. This enables key development to improve the quality and consistency of programmes but also supports our focus on inclusion.

Mhairi Crawford

MTS Chair



Mountain Training Scotland's Treasurer's Foreword

This year we have seen a continued increase in applications for the Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) Bursary. Bursaries are offered for whom the personal financial constraints may be a barrier to participation and whose participation may promote MTS's commitment to diversity, equity, equality and inclusion aims.

We are delighted to see the continuing increase in the level of applications and as importantly, successful applicants progressing and completing their intended training and/or assessment. Payments made through the MTS bursary scheme this year were £3.1k to support nine candidates on a Mountain Training qualification pathway completing their intended training or assessment course. This is an increase of £1.9k year on year.

The Board would like to acknowledge and extend our thanks to the Cairngorm Club for their generous support of the bursary scheme which is enabling our ability to support the increasing level of applications noted above.

This year MTS faced financial challenges mainly due to a 10% decrease in registrations and an increase in operating costs. Although income for registrations was up £6.4k year on year, this was due to the change in fee structure across all MT organisations which resulted in both candidate registration fees and subscriptions and levies payable to MTUKI increasing. We ended the year with a deficit of £5.4k against a revised forecast deficit of £11.3k.

It is clear that operating at a financial loss year after year is unsustainable. Rising costs across all areas of expenditure have contributed to this pressure. At the same time, the broad scope of work now undertaken by MTS continues to require support from the Financial and Administration assistant, and significant input from the Technical Officer, both in development work and aspects of operational administration.

The growth of the MTS provider network (and associated staff) and the delivery of specialist training events to support our community of practice strategy has also led to an increased use of external contractors. These measures are intended to create capacity for the Executive Officer to lead and be actively involved in Mountain Training initiatives (referred to as global projects), coordinate MTS development projects, and manage the overall day to day operations of MTS. Our reserve balance of £23,500 remains in line with our agreed reserves policy for 2024-2025. Our operational plan for 2025-2026 will be tightly tailored to our available resources to ensure our continued ability to deliver on our development and support commitments as detailed in our operational plan for 2025-2026.

We remain grateful to sportscotland to receive our ongoing development investment of £25k which allows us to continue to deliver on our development goals mapped out in our strategic plan 2022-2026. In the early part of this year, we will review our current strategic plan and associated budgets with the aim of developing a revised strategy for the 2026–2030 period and will seek to secure an appropriate level of support from sportscotland to deliver proposed development initiatives.

Marie Dignam

Treasurer



Mountain Training Scotland's Executive Officer's Report

Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) made significant progress in 2024–25, working with our Mountain Training and Scottish strategic partners (Mountaineering Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and sportscotland), enhancing training provision, broadening inclusivity, and reinforcing operational resilience—despite the challenges of unpredictable winter conditions and a modest financial deficit.

Key developments included the launch of a new training scheme, strengthened governance and sustainability planning, and deeper engagement with both our instructor community and wider public. Notable progress in diversity, accessibility, and candidate outcomes continues to reflect our commitment to a robust and inclusive future for those undertaking a Mountain Training course in Scotland.

I've always felt that spring holds a quiet optimism—the promise of longer days, warmer weather (we hope!), and the first signs of new growth. That sense of renewal feels particularly apt this year. Much of the strength and success of Mountain Training Scotland lies in a long-standing and dedicated community of people—candidates, course providers and their staff—who share a passion for the outdoors and a commitment to helping others experience them safely and responsibly. While we benefit from the support of technology, it's the enthusiasm, professionalism, and deep personal connections across this community that underpin everything we do.

The last few years have taught us how quickly our assumptions—about the freedom to travel, to walk and climb, to explore wild spaces—can be disrupted. Whether it was the sudden onset of the pandemic or the increasingly visible consequences of climate change, we've seen how fragile these freedoms can be. Climate change, in particular, presents a profound and ongoing challenge to our activities, especially so in winter. It's vital that we continue to identify and implement credible, practical actions that reduce the environmental impact of mountain-related activity.

Our core challenge remains unchanged: to support people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and backgrounds—regardless of economic means—to develop the confidence and skills to explore their local wild spaces. The leaders and instructors trained and assessed through Mountain Training qualification schemes play a crucial role in this. They inspire others to undertake land-based adventures with confidence, competence, and a strong awareness of sustainability.

Promoting equity of access to the outdoors is not something we can achieve alone. It will require sustained, collaborative effort from many organisations. Mountain Training Scotland is committed to working closely with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that mountain training continues to offer opportunity, inspiration, and a positive environmental legacy for future generations.

George McEwan

MTS Executive Officer

Core activities and achievements overview



**Mountain
Training**
Scotland

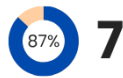
Key
Aim 1

Key
Aim 2

Key
Aim 3

Summary of the core activities, achievements and progress towards priorities identified in the Mountain Training Scotland Annual Plan and Budget 2024–2025 and the Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan 2022–2026.

Key Outputs



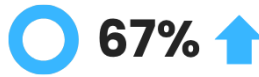
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Planned projects completed



35%

% of female candidates registered with MTS

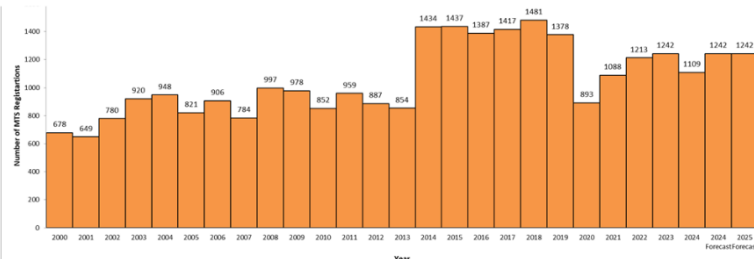


% increase of candidates complete a skills scheme training course



Increase in expenditure

MTS Registration Trend



MTS Income/Expenditure Trend



Mountain Training Scotland made significant strides in enhancing training provision, broadening inclusivity, and reinforcing operational resilience in 2024–25, despite a challenging financial climate and a modest financial deficit.

Key developments included the launch of new schemes, deeper community engagement, and strengthened governance and sustainability planning. Progress in diversity, training accessibility, and candidate outcomes highlights a continued commitment to a robust, inclusive future for mountain training in Scotland.

Operational Plan 2024-2025 development output priorities

Development = tasks/projects to support MTS strategic outcomes.

Global Project - Mountain Training project.

2024-2025

Strategic Aim 1 - 'To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification	Outputs	Comments (RAG) Please click on link to see update
1.2 Development	Development of One day Outdoor Skills courses (part of MT Skills Schemes)	MT Global Project: Research project been carried out to determine the need and wants of prospective client groups. <u>MT Global Project Stage 1 completed 31/3/2025</u>
	Bouldering Wall Instructor implementation	<u>MT Global Project: Completed 31/3/2025</u>
	Review and update. of Mountain Training climbing schemes to incorporate Mountain Training leadership and decision making pathway and competencies.	<u>Completed 2/1/2025</u>

<p>1.6 Sustainability</p>	<p>Embed and promote the principles of sustainable practice across personal skills training and qualification schemes via sessions at workshops and seminars.</p>	<p>This work will build on the MTS project led by Patrick Baker and will tie into MTUKI/Mountain Training sustainability strategy.</p> <p>"In collaboration with MTUKI, Mountaineering Scotland and identified third sector partners support and promote safe, environmentally friendly, and sustainable participation in mountain-related activities via embed and promote the principles of sustainable practice across personal skills training and qualification schemes."</p> <p>Stage 1 Completed -On-going</p>
<p>1.7 Resilience:</p>	<p>Review and develop on-line digital resources for all schemes - Winter ML all theory for syllabus E-learning package</p>	<p><u>This work will involve Technical Officer working closely with MTUKI Digital Coordinator Emily Law to create additional content using the new Articulate platform embedded in the new MT website as a Mountain Training resource.</u></p> <p><u>To increase the resilience of both provider networks and candidate pathways develop new methods for resilient training delivery, in collaboration with MTUKI to support the provision of the Mountain Training schemes in Scotland, the UK and Ireland ensuring candidate pathway can continue even if physical course provision disrupted.</u></p> <p><u>Completed 31/3/2025</u></p>

Strategic Aim 2 - 'To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland'		
	Outputs	Comments
2.1 Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion	Activity and outputs from 'Our Movement Matters' research.	<u>In short term other initiatives including working with Scottish strategic partners e.g. Ramblers (OTA). Completed June 2024</u>
	MTS Bursary Scheme	<u>This is MTS commitment - will combine with the additional support from Cairngorm Club of £3k over next three years (£1k each year) - so bursary fund will remain at £5k.</u>
2.2 Connect with new and returning leaders	Attend and work on Mountaineering Scotland student safety seminar. Attend and work MTA Winter CPD seminar Winter 2024	Not actioned due to MTS staff non-availability

Mountain Training Scotland Operational Plan 2024-2025 Activities and outputs.

Strategic Aim 1

‘To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’

Coordination

The Mountain Training network

Mountain Training Scotland plays a key role in maintaining and developing effective collaboration across the UK and Ireland to support broad participation in mountain-related activities. This cooperation, achieved through Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (MTUKI) and the national technical staff network, ensures the continued delivery of the physical, social, and wellbeing benefits of these activities to a diverse range of participants. Collaboration happens strategically through MTUKI council meetings held every three years, and operationally via monthly technical staff meetings.

Mountain Training Scotland key strategic partners

At MTUKI Council meetings, our collaboration with key strategic partners—Mountaineering Scotland, Glenmore Lodge, and sportscotland—is vital to ensuring that a cohesive Scottish perspective is represented on mountain and related issues across the UK and Ireland.

Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members

Within Scotland Mountain Training Scotland maintains and develops effective partnership collaborating with the Council of Members of Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) by collectively, helping to set overall policy, defining and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets this done by quarterly MTS Council meetings. Rambler’s new rep was welcomed onto the MTS Council in October 2024.

Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Group

The Mountain Training Scotland Executive Officer attends the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain safety Group meetings on a regular basis. The purpose of this group is to monitor and review mountain safety strategy and collaborate with partners on mountain safety issues in Scotland. Within that context we were involved in two key projects.

- *Microspikes*

The Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Group (MSG) developed an infographic to support winter safety advice on the use of microspikes, following feedback from a recent survey. A working group—including representatives from AMI, BMG, and Mountain Training Scotland— contributed to creating the associated guidance. Mountain Training Scotland incorporated and adapted this new guidance into guidance for Trainers and assessor in the Winter Mountain Leader scheme.

- *Incident Data and Lessons Learned and Investigating adverse events*

An on-going project led by Mountaineering Scotland MSG is looking into methodologies for collating data from mountain incidents to a central point facilitating a review and to identify trends to help inform MSG safety strategies. In parallel MTUKI have convened a working group from national centres, the professional associations, mountaineering councils and national Mountain Training organisations to identify and establish good practice for investigating adverse events. MTUKI commissioned Andy Bevan - a highly experienced Security, Law Enforcement, and Counter Terrorism Consultant with a 39-year career spanning the British Army, policing—including as a Detective Chief Superintendent—alongside extensive work in the outdoor sector as an International Mountain Leader and climbing instructor. As a Director of Mountain Training Cymru since 2021, he recently led an investigation into a rock-climbing accident that occurred during a Mountain Training Rock Climbing Development Instructor training course. Andy used his combined expertise to develop an “Investigating Adverse Events” template which has been adopted by the national Mountain Training organisations.

Development

Project to incorporate Mountain Training leadership and decision-making competencies into the climbing schemes

The revised syllabi and revised scheme handbooks went live on the 2/1/2025. The only outstanding snagging issue is finalising RCDI trainer and assessor guidance which is due to be finalised by the end of April 2025.

New Mountain Training Bouldering Wall Instructor scheme

MTS approved five providers and ten Course Directors for a public launch date of the 31/03/2025.

Development of Mountain Training One day Outdoor Skills course

Qualitative research project been carried out to determine need and wants of prospective client groups. National Mountain Training organisations to consider the report and its recommendations as part of Phase 2.

Winter Mountain Leader season 2024-2025

Mountain Training Scotland liaises very closely with both MTUKI who are responsible for the oversight of the Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor scheme, and our provider network regarding scheme provision in winter with regard conditions.

Winter weather and conditions

It was another very challenging winter weather and conditions wise. Whilst the general theme we have experienced in previous seasons, of both weather and conditions being very dynamic and increasingly unpredictable. Snow cover unlike last year, with some notable exceptions early in January, was extremely poor with conspicuous lack of depth. The mega thaw that occurred in January pretty much deleted the snow cover in the Highlands. If it was not for the ‘dump’ of snow during Storm Eowyn (post the January mega thaw) then the season would have ended far earlier than it did. As it was the snow that fell then, plus several occasions thereafter enabled the season to limp along till mid-March. Ironically conditions did start to improve later in March but it was too little too late for course activity, before a very mild spring finally called time.

Winter Mountain Leader Course Activity

Mountain Training Scotland providers ran a total of 15 (9 down on last year) courses - 10 training courses and 5 assessments – whilst 5 re-assessments were also run. Unfortunately due to conditions our providers ended up cancelling 3 training and 7 assessments.

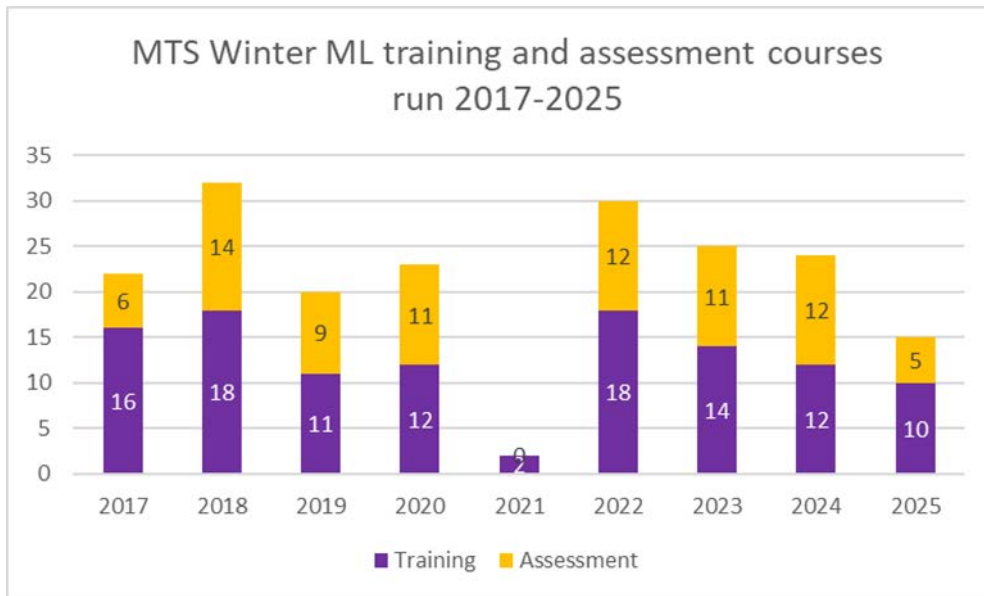


Figure 1 MTS Winter Mountain Leader training and assessment courses run 2017-2025

A total of 82 (down on 102 last year) candidates completed training and 30 (down on 74 last year) assessment. Of the 30 completing assessment 28 passed (A pass rate of 88% - up on the 82% last year), 2 were deferred (compared to 14 last year) and none failed.

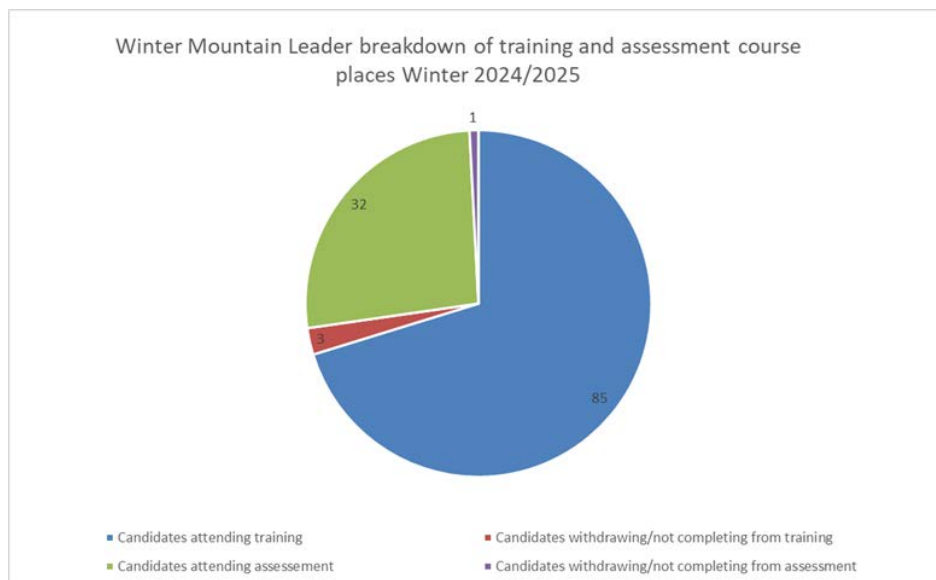


Figure 2 Winter Mountain Leader breakdown of training and assessment course places Winter 2024/2025

Winter Mountain Leader Snow Shelter activity

Of the 15 courses that ran, not one course managed an overnight in a snowhole.

This is the first year in the history of the Winter Mountain Leader scheme since its inception in 1965 that no course has managed an overnight in a snowhole.

The very limited and very shallow snowpack (either bullet hard, or thawing) and mild conditions (weather system timings continue to be very unreliable) were the most common cited reasons for groups not overnighting in a snowhole.

Various alternative strategies including using emergency shelters to have a break and a meal, then navigate of the hill in darkness, plus camping, bothies and bivvies were all successfully used.

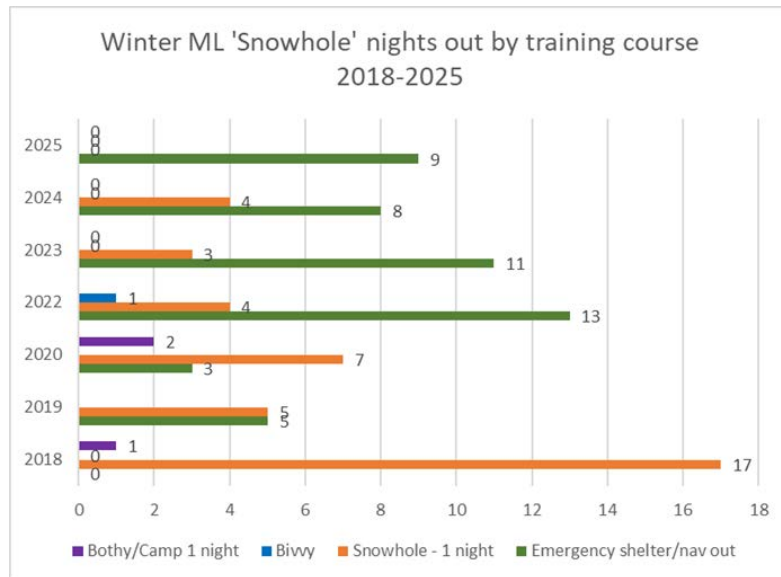


Figure 3 Winter Mountain Leader 'snowhole' nights out by training course

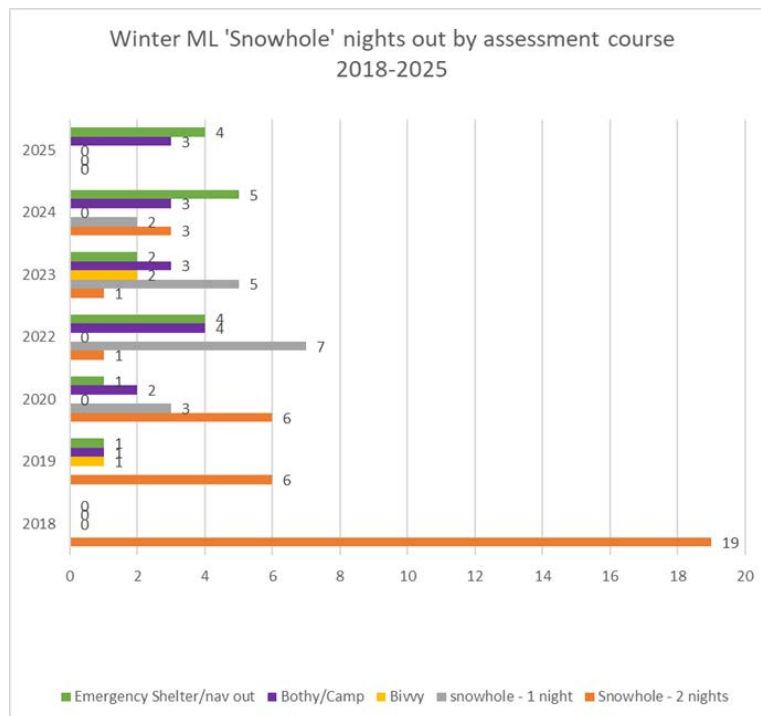


Figure 4 Winter Mountain Leader 'snowhole' nights out by assessment course

Winter Mountain Leader Course Activity by Gender

A total of 82 candidates completed Winter Mountain Leader training, with 26 (32%) identifying as female. At assessment, 29 candidates completed the process, of whom 7 (24%) were female.

This marks a positive shift compared to 2017, when only 19% of those completing training and 7% of those passing the assessment were female.

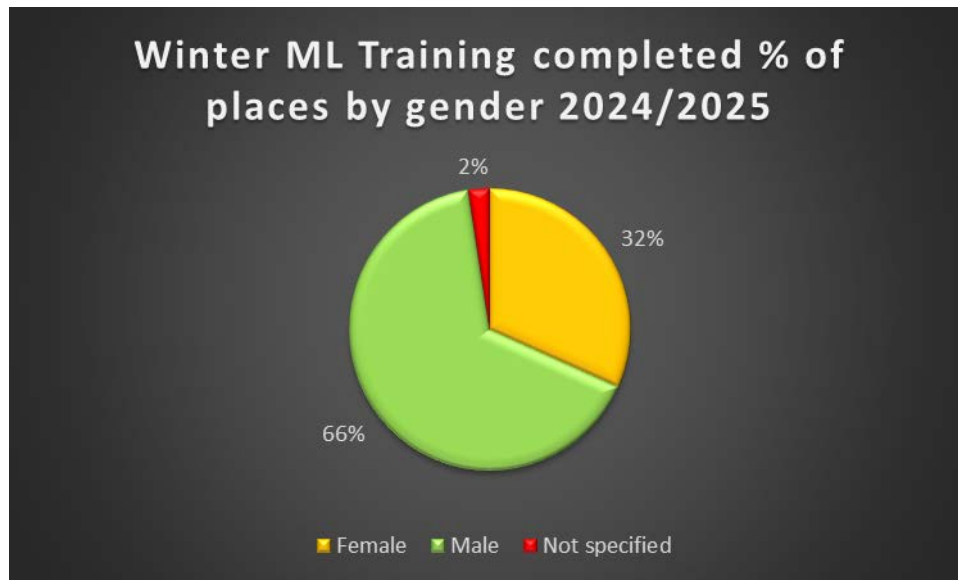


Figure 5 Winter ML Training completed % places by gender 2024/2025



Figure 6 Winter ML Assessment % places by gender 2024/2025

Consistency

Provider and Course Director support visits

We ensure the consistency and quality of scheme provision and delivery via a programme of Provider and course Director support visits (referred to as 'moderations'). An important part of this process is Course Directors and course staff who often work in isolation and don't have the chance

to receive feedback and observe others receive coaching point feedback which are not intended as a criticism but more as ideas to think about, discuss and consider.

The Executive Officer undertakes these visits with additional support (primarily across the Lowland Leader scheme) from the Technical Officer. Those who are probationary Providers and/or Course Directors will receive a visit from one of the technical staff as part of their probation process.

There was a reduced focus on support visits this year due to staff capacity being committed to development projects. Priority for support visits was on probationary Course Directors.

This year we undertook a total of 9 visits across the schemes provided by Mountain Training Scotland Providers. Four of these visits were to probationary Course Directors. Four planned Winter Mountain Leader visits did not take place as the courses were cancelled. The visits were as follows:

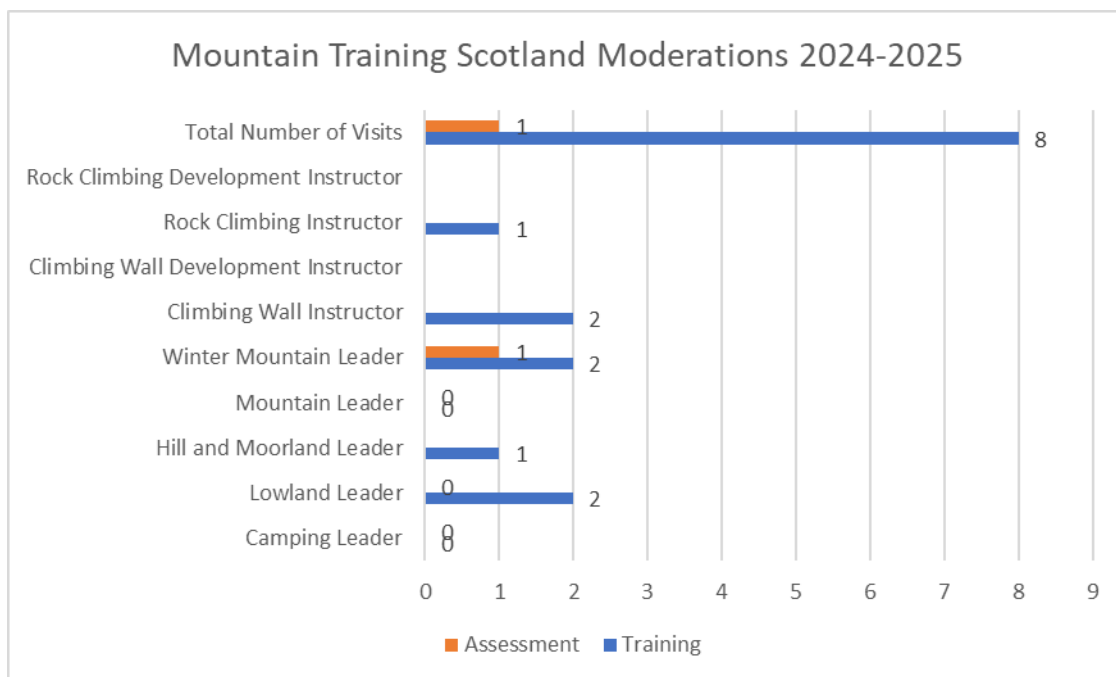


Figure 7 Moderations 2024-2025

Incidents and accidents

Mountain Training Scotland asks our provider network and their staff to report any incidents/unusual occurrences that happen on Mountain Training courses. An incident is defined as an unplanned occurrence or event where there is injury (including fatal injury). It can include any event that may give rise to physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Whilst an unusual occurrence is an event, or sequence of events, which could have led to an incident that had the potential to cause harm but did not do so, either through preventative measures or a lack of final causation. Mountain Training requires all its Providers to report RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents to Mountain Training within the time frame stated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (Immediately in the case of death or major injury; or within fifteen days in the case of seven-day injuries to their Executive/Technical Officer).

This is a summary of incidents and unusual occurrences from 2014 -2025 on Mountain Training Scotland courses. For context Mountain Training Scotland has received 39 reports since 2014 and we

have trained 8874 and assessed 5179 (total 14053) candidates in Scotland. This is an incident/unusual occurrence rate of 0.3%.

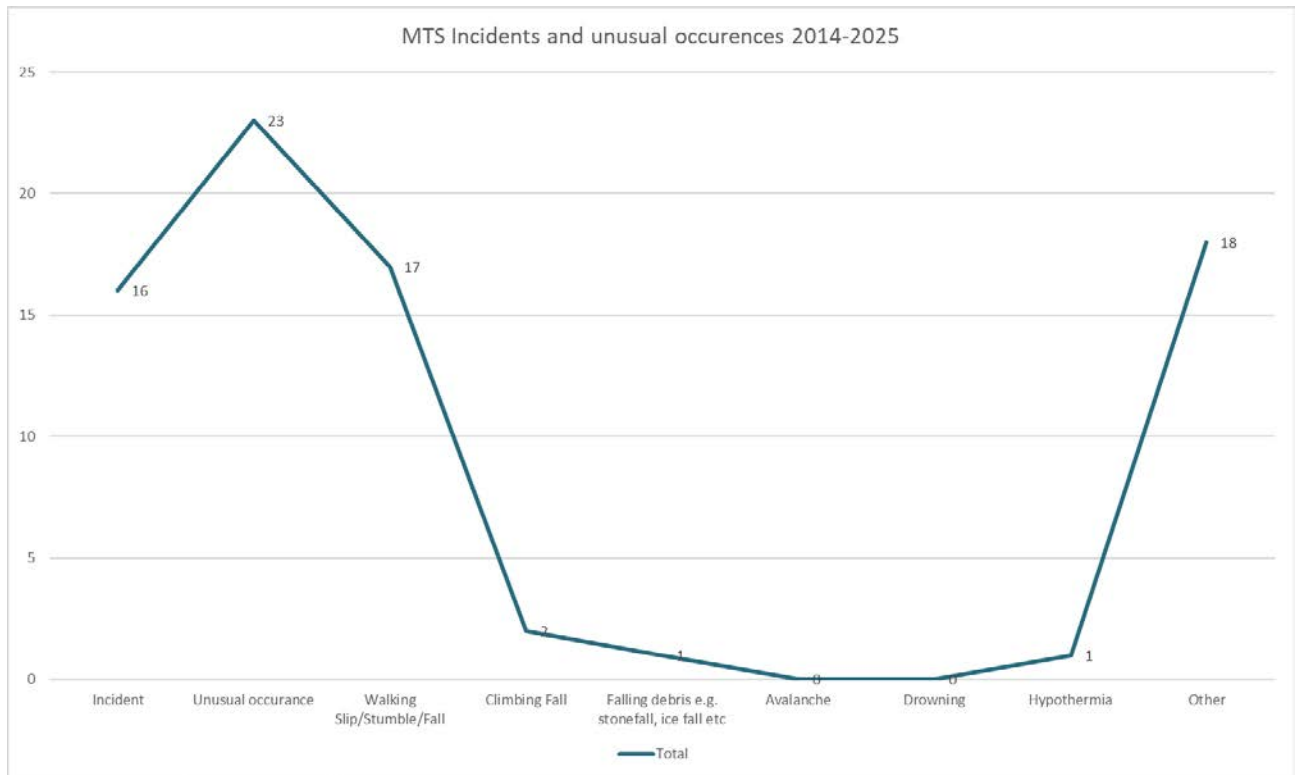


Figure 8 Reported Incidents and Unusual Occurrences 2014-2025

Walking slips/stumbles/fall are the most common mechanism of an event occurring, whilst 'other' is the next most common. 'Other' consists mainly of medical related events.

In 2024/2025 Mountain Training Scotland received six reports three of which we classed as unusual occurrences. Any observations from these reports are shared as part of our 'Community of Practice' process at our annual Provider and staff seminar. A summary of each is as follows:

- *Medical Emergency – Cardiac Arrest and Resuscitation*

Lowland Leader Training

During a Lowland Leader training course, a candidate collapsed while seated, becoming unresponsive with signs of vomiting and agonal breathing. The course director, who was not initially present, arrived shortly afterwards and instructed a member of the public to call emergency services and notify park staff. A Beecraigs Countryside Park staff member, who was a former firefighter, responded promptly and, together with a passing doctor, initiated CPR. A defibrillator was brought to the scene and successfully deployed. The candidate regained consciousness, with guidance provided throughout by the emergency call handler. Paramedics took over on arrival. The course team provided next of kin and staff contact details, along with the candidate's signed consent form. Police and a second doctor arrived shortly thereafter. The candidate was transferred to hospital, where they remained for two days before making a full recovery.

- *Fire Incident – Tent Fire in Camp*

Mountain Leader Training

Following the evening meal during a Mountain Leader training course, a fire broke out in a tent at a remote camp. All stoves and equipment had been packed away, and the cause of the fire remains unclear. Quick action by team members prevented the fire from spreading. The tent and associated sleeping kit were destroyed, but no injuries occurred. Calm weather allowed for alternative sleeping arrangements to be made without issue.

- *Crag Safety Incident – Intervention Involving Unsupervised Child*

Rock Climbing Instructor Assessment

At a busy crag near Neilston, a family group with two young children had set up at a quieter but less stable section of the cliff. An adult had rigged a bottom rope system with considerable drag and was leading a traverse on a sloping ledge. A nearby instructor (under assessment) observed one of the children standing unprotected on a sloping ledge while holding a loose rock, with no helmet and in clear danger of a pendulum fall. The rest of the group appeared unaware of the situation. The course director quickly assessed the risk and used a pre-rigged abseil line by one of the candidates to reach the child and assist them to safety. The adult was later approached for feedback but was dismissive of the concerns raised.

- *Equipment Failure – Boot Sole Detachment*

Mountain Leader Training

During a mountain journey in Coire Domhain, a candidate experienced complete detachment of a boot sole. The group carried out an improvised repair and chose to shorten the route, returning via an alternative track. The decision was considered appropriate and effective, allowing the group to manage the incident without further issue.

- *Minor Head Injury – Indoor Bouldering*

Climbing Wall Instructor Training

While warming up at an indoor bouldering facility, a candidate sustained a minor head injury during a game of "chaos tig." The individual turned quickly and collided with a nearby wall, falling and striking their head and hands. They were taken to A&E, diagnosed with mild concussion, and sent home. Symptoms resolved fully over the following days.

- *Fall and Injury – Sliding/Tumbling Incident*

Winter Mountain Leader Assessment

During a Winter Mountain Leader assessment, a candidate slipped while traversing steep, mixed snow terrain. They stepped onto a footprint on exposed turf, which gave way underfoot, leading to a loss of balance and a slide. Initially landing on their right hip, they attempted to stop using the gully walls but were unsuccessful. On reaching a snow slope, they adopted an ice axe arrest position, which briefly slowed their descent. Upon encountering another patch of exposed ground, their ice axe was dislodged, leading to a tumble over rough terrain. The candidate let go of the axe in an

attempt to prevent injury but continued to slide, eventually striking an exposed rock. The impact caused them to spin and tumble further. Whilst the candidate suffered minor injuries, including a sprained ankle, they completed the course.

- *General Observations*

Across all the reported incidents, and supported by follow-up conversations with the staff involved, there is consistent evidence that both candidates and instructors are effectively applying the core principles of mountain safety. These include clear communication, strong situational awareness, adherence to emergency protocols, and sound, dynamic decision-making in pressured environments.

The reports also reinforce the value of preparedness. First aid training, equipment redundancy—or the ability to carry out improvised repairs—and structured, attentive supervision all emerge as key factors in preventing incidents from escalating.

In every case, the supporting communication and administrative systems proved robust. This included the timely sharing of next of kin information, signed consent forms, emergency contact details, and thorough incident review processes post-event.

Community of Practice

Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) Course Directors contain a vast reservoir of knowledge and experience, it is a valuable asset and is crucial to the continued successful provision of top-quality training and assessment courses in Scotland. A key element in the effective continued delivery of MTS Mountain Training qualification and personal skills courses is ensuring that the process of sharing knowledge, wisdom and experience within this group is continued. It is essential that MTS creates a variety of formal and informal opportunities for active practitioners working on MTS courses to learn from each other, and have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally – be it becoming a Tutor on the Hill and Mountain Skills scheme through to becoming a Course Director on Winter ML assessment.

MTS believes that allowing opportunities, for those involved in the delivery of the Mountain Training award schemes, to share knowledge, experience and practice is key to having a successful succession planning/community of practice model that underpins any CPD pathway from Tutor to Course Director through to Course Provider, hence our development of a Community of Practice strategy to help support this process.

Providers, Course Directors and Tutors

The MTS Board approved three new Course Directors; 3 new Providers have been approved.

In 2024-2025 3 Providers resigned their course approvals; 4 Course Directors approval to direct either lapsed or they resigned their approval.

In 2024-2025 we had a total of 86 approved Course Directors and Tutors working for 38 Mountain Training Scotland approved Providers.

4 year rolling programme 'Community of Practice' workshops

MTS has put together what will become a 4-year rolling programme of discipline specific workshops that are open to all those who provide, direct, tutor or work on both the personal skills course and

the qualification courses. These workshops will be practically focused, and the plan is for them to be a mixture of self-led group work drawing on the skills and knowledge from within the provider network and lead from subject matter experts when appropriate. MTS will make sure were possible that these workshops count as CPD for the 4 associations (AMI, BAIML, BMG and MTA). The following were run in April 2024:

MTS Community of Practice Walking Discipline – Navigation attended by 13 people

MTS Community of Practice Climbing Discipline – Teaching Personal Climbing attend by 7 people

Total number of attendees 20 people

MTS Workshops, seminars and training

This year we ran the following:

2 x Training and assessing skills (2 days) attended by 18 people

2 x MTS Teaching and Learning Workshops (1 day) attended by 11 people

2 x MTS Leadership and Decision-Making induction (1 day) attend by 17 people

2 x Human Factors - Prevent accidents, train non-technical Skills (1 day) attended by 8 people

MTS All Provider, course director, tutor and staff seminar attended by 25 people

MTS Winter ML Provider and Staff Seminar attended by 15 people.

Total number of attendees: 104

Pathways

As part of our aim to identify and create accessible pathways to support and enable candidates to develop their interests within mountain and climbing related activities we are working with Mountaineering Scotland by creating an infrastructure of qualified personal skills training providers in Scotland and sharing accessible and relevant resources.

Key outputs in this support of this have involved supporting Mountaineering Scotland Climb Scotland and Mountain Safety Advisor team become approved MTS Mountain Training personal skills tutors.

The Climb Scotland team completed the pathway to becoming Climbing Wall Instructor Course Directors. This will allow them to add qualification training to the portfolio of options they can offer the various community groups and clubs they work with.

Sustainability

MTS/MTUKI Sustainability plan

Mountain Training Scotland is developing a sustainability plan. We completed Phase 1 - Materiality assessment (An assessment of the most material environmental, social and governance factors (risks and opportunities) involved in Mountain Training Scotland's operational activity) in 2024. Phase 2 is currently underway and involves us undertaking and working in parallel with the MTUKI sustainability working group project one of whose aims are the creation of an overarching Mountain Training sustainability policy such that the national Mountain Training organisations can replicate, expand and adapt that for themselves without any conflicting messages.

Resilience

On-line digital learning resources

Mountain Training Scotland began developing a series of on-line digital learning resources during lockdown in 2021 with the creation of a Winter Mountain Leader ‘Snow and Avalanche’ on-line course based around the relevant Winter Mountain Leader competencies. Since then we have been involved in the development of additional resources, for use by our provider and staff network as part of our ‘Community of Practice’ strategy, candidates and partner organisations.

Mountain Training digital learning hub

Following MTUKI a Mountain Training Digital Engagement Coordinator in 2023 work is continuing on E-learning development. Mountain Training is now using a new platform called ‘Articulate’. Part of creating this new hub was to transfer all the digital content previously hosted on teachable to Articulate.

Mountain Training Scotland digital outputs

Mountain Training Scotland staff working with the Mountain Training Digital Coordinator have transferred most of the MTS e-learning content to Articulate. This all under a new page on the website under ‘resources’ <https://www.mountain-training.org/help/resources/e-learning/> Some of the new content is only available to candidates registered on a scheme or who are MTA Members.

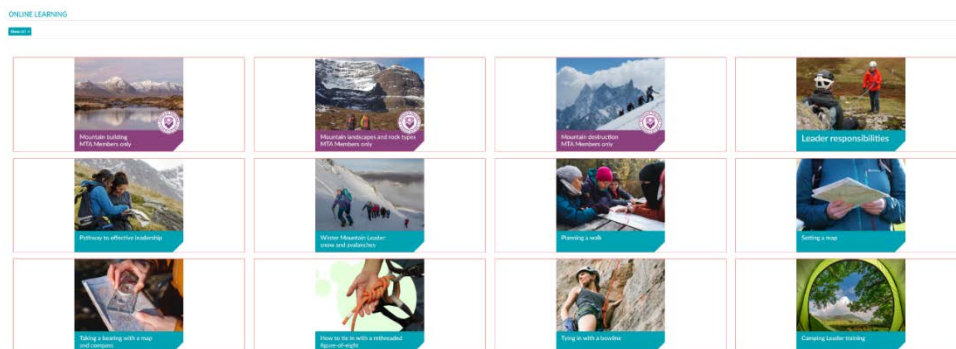


Figure 9 Mountain Training e-Learning content for candidates

Strategic Aim 2:

‘To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’

Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion

Mountain Training Scotland Bursary Scheme

Mountain Training Scotland offers a bursary scheme to those candidates “...for whom both the personal financial constraints may be a barrier to participation and whose participation may promote MTS’s commitment to diversity, equity, equality and inclusion...”

MTS would like to acknowledge the generous financial support from the Cairngorm Club that helps support bursary awards to applicants. Based in Aberdeen, the Cairngorm Club was founded in 1887 and is the oldest and one of the largest hillwalking and climbing clubs in Scotland.

In 2024-2025 we received fourteen applications of which eleven have been approved. We have made grant payments to value of £3,141 (this includes £1k we receive from the Cairngorm Club) to nine applicants in 2024/2025.

Mountain Training Scotland has paid out since the startup of the bursary scheme in 2019 a total of £11,086 to 47 applicants who have completed their Mountain Training training and/or assessment course. The total promised since start up is £19,900.

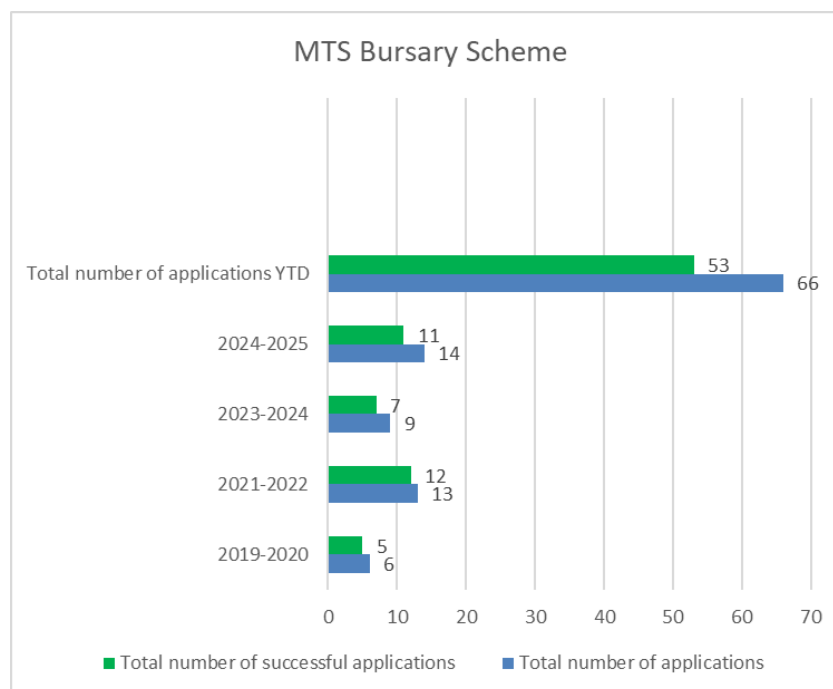


Figure 10 Bursary Scheme Number of applicants 2019-2025

MTS Bursary Scheme 2024-2025 YTD by gender

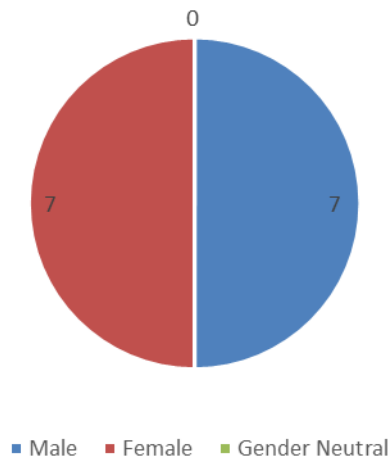


Figure 11 Bursary Scheme applicants 2024-2025 by Gender

MTS Bursary Scheme 2024-2025 by ethnicity

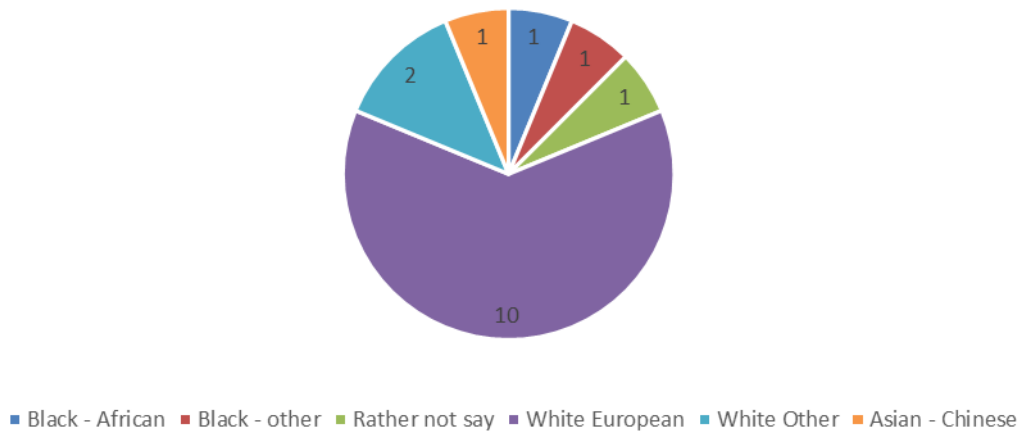


Figure 12 Bursary Scheme applicants 2024-2025 by Ethnicity

Mountain Training Scotland Course Director, Tutors and associated staff 'workforce'

Mountain Training Scotland had 84 approved Course Directors and Tutors in 2024/25. Of this number 12 are female, or 14% 12% of the total. This has increased slightly since 2023-2024 when we had only had 10 female Tutors and/or Course Directors. *NOTE: The charts below illustrate the profile of the Tutor/Course Director 'workforce' within the walking schemes. Currently all climbing scheme Tutors and/or Course Directors are male.*

A key outcome in the short term (by 2026) is to work toward ensuring the Mountain Training Scotland Course Director/Tutor and associated staff 'workforce' at the very least broadly reflects the gender and ethnicity profile of candidates within that scheme e.g. the gender profile for Course Directors on the Lowland Leader scheme 20% female whilst the gender profile for the same scheme amongst candidates is 59% (see Fig 9 10 % of registrations (breakdown by scheme) by gender in 2022). As can be seen from the charts we still have a journey ahead.

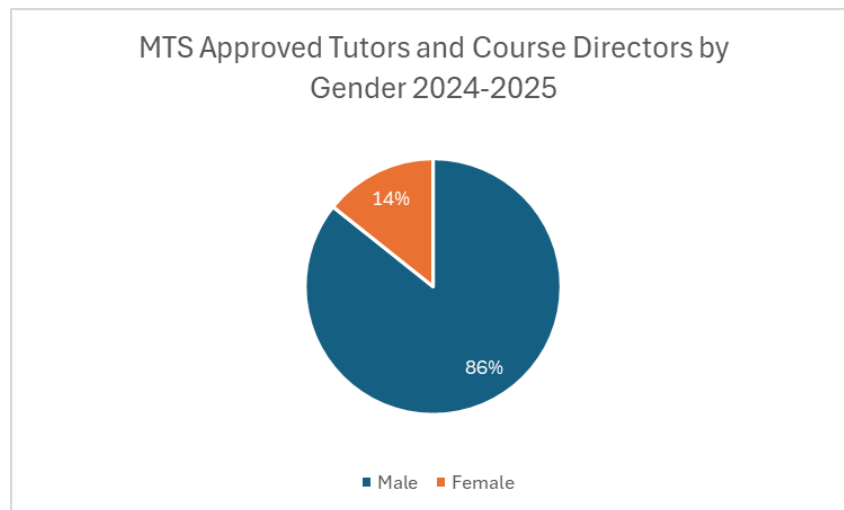


Figure 13 MTS Approved Tutors and Course Directors by Gender 2024 - 2025

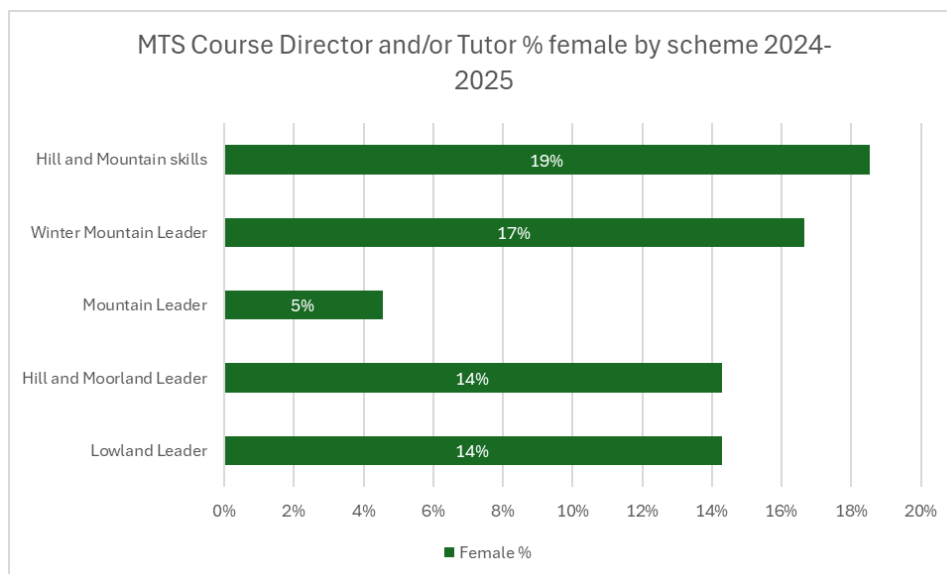


Figure 14 MTS Course Director and/or Tutor % female by scheme 2024/2025

‘Reasonable adjustments’

Recording evidence of Course Directors making ‘reasonable adjustments’ began in 2013, with eighty-five reports received to date. Seventeen case studies (anonymised reports) were received in 2024-25. These reference candidates attending Mountain Training Scotland courses requesting or requiring ‘reasonable adjustments,’ outlining the process used to identify their requirements and agree suitable and appropriate strategies to accommodate and support them during their course. These reports and the lessons learned are shared at the annual Mountain Training Scotland Provider and Staff seminar held in the autumn.

As a principle we have found that allowing the candidate the opportunity to describe their condition and how they manage it, and what the course staff can do to support them works well in facilitating candidates taking part and completing their course.

The following is a list of reports received:

1. Candidate with autism ML assessment May 2024
2. Candidate recovering from concussion RCI Training May 2024
3. Candidate neurodiverse HML Training May 2024
4. Candidate with autism and cystic fibrosis ML Training May 2024
5. Diverse Group ICA Aug 2024
6. Candidate with autism and cystic fibrosis ML Assessment Sept 2024
7. Candidate with ostomy Summer ML Trng Oct 2024
8. Candidate claustrophobia Winter ML Trng Jan 2025
9. Candidates anxiety and historical cold injury Winter ML Trng Jan 2025
10. Candidates neurodiverse CWI trng Jan 2025
11. Candidates autistic CWI trng Jan 2025
12. Candidates neurodiverse CWI trng Jan 2025
13. 3 x Candidates health conditions Winter ML Trng Feb 2025
14. Candidate cystic fibrosis Winter ML Trng Feb 2025
15. Long Covid and epileptic_ autism Winter ML Trng Feb 2025

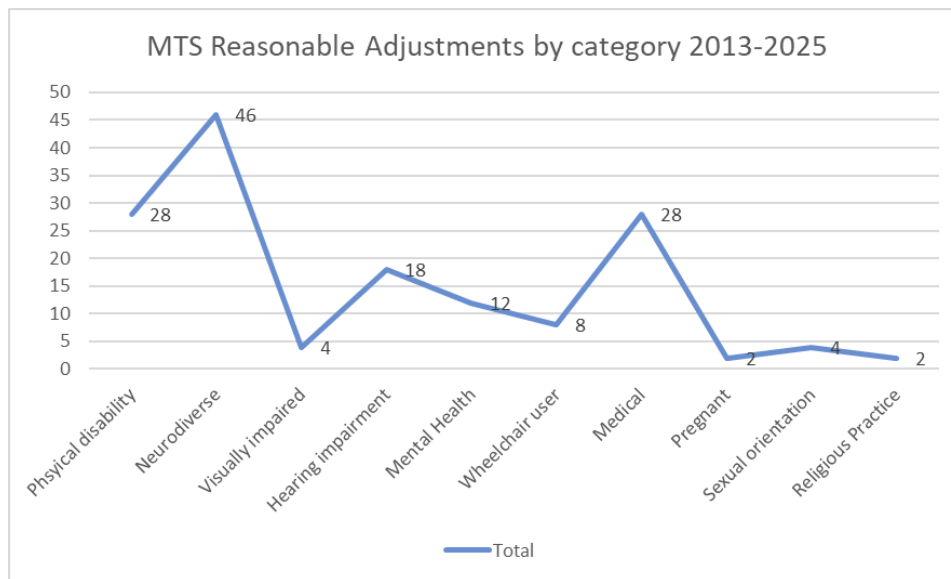


Figure 15 MTS Reasonable adjustments by category 2013-2025

As can be seen from the above data 'reasonable adjustments' the single largest category is 'neurodiverse'. This covers a very wide of conditions including Autism, ADHD, ADD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia. The Climbing Wall Instructor Scheme tends to present the greater number of candidates who have one or more of these conditions – mainly due to the demographic of younger candidates. On the Mountain Leader schemes it is less common but those candidates have tended to be older adults (often female) who have been recently diagnosed.

Next largest 'category' is physical disability. This covers a wide range of candidates with various physical impairments and ranges from amputees (many of whom are/were military), wheelchair users, and those who have a visual or hearing impairment (to varying degrees).

The joint second largest category covers 'medical' and includes various conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, seizures, rheumatoid arthritis, and those who have had a transplant.

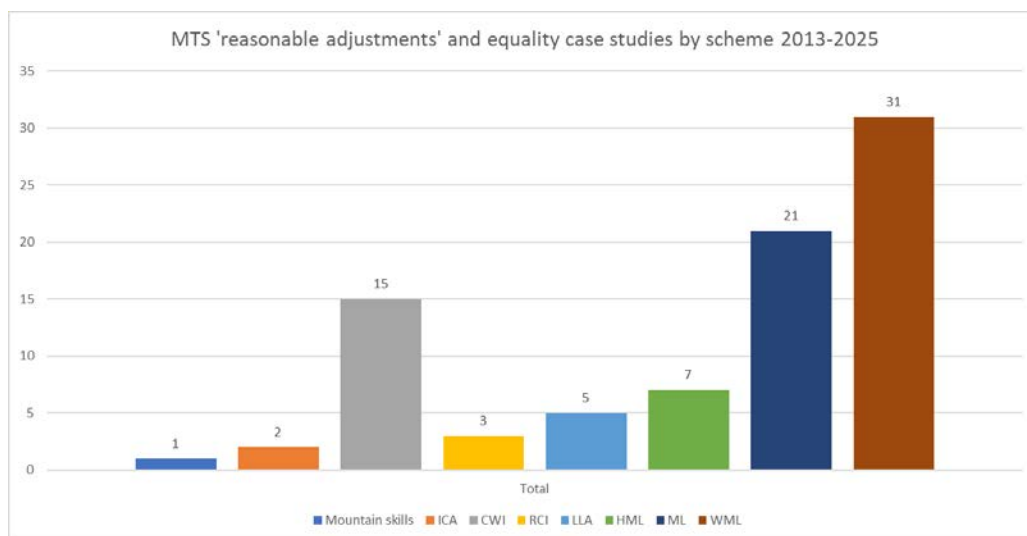


Figure 16 MTS 'reasonable adjustments' and equality case studies by scheme 2013-2025

Connect with new and returning leaders

Registrations

Total registrations for 2024 were 982 (corrected for CWI abseil mod free reg) across all the qualification schemes. Forecast was for 1094 for the year (corrected for CWI abseil module). For the same period in 2023 the total was 1094; **this is a decrease of 10.2%.**

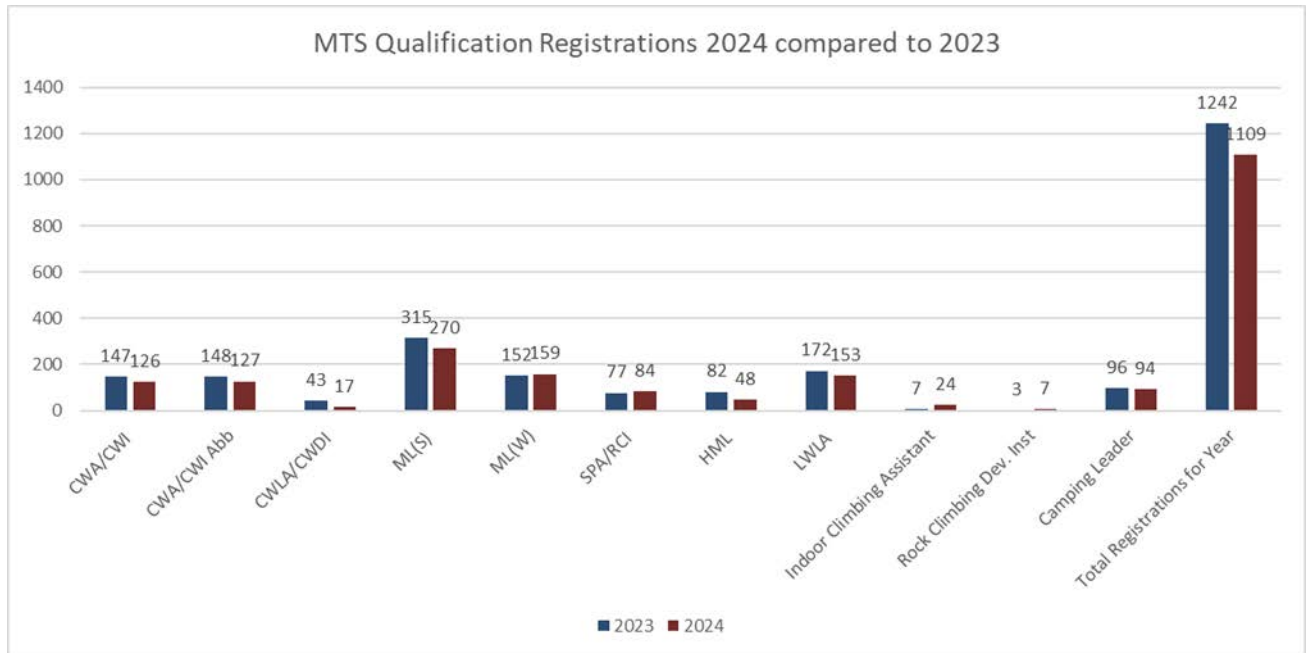


Figure 17 MTS Qualification Registrations 2024 compared to 2023

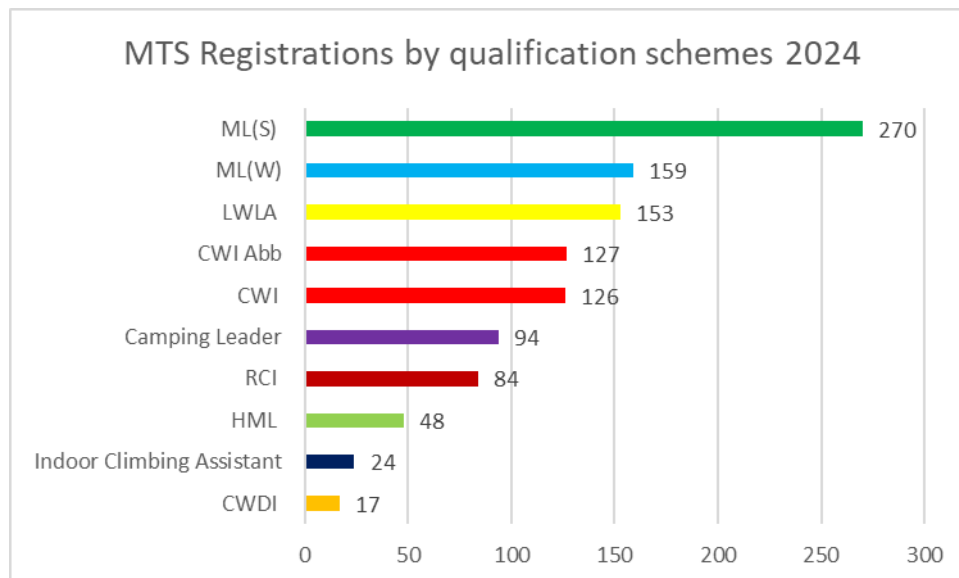


Figure 18 MTS Qualification Registrations 2024

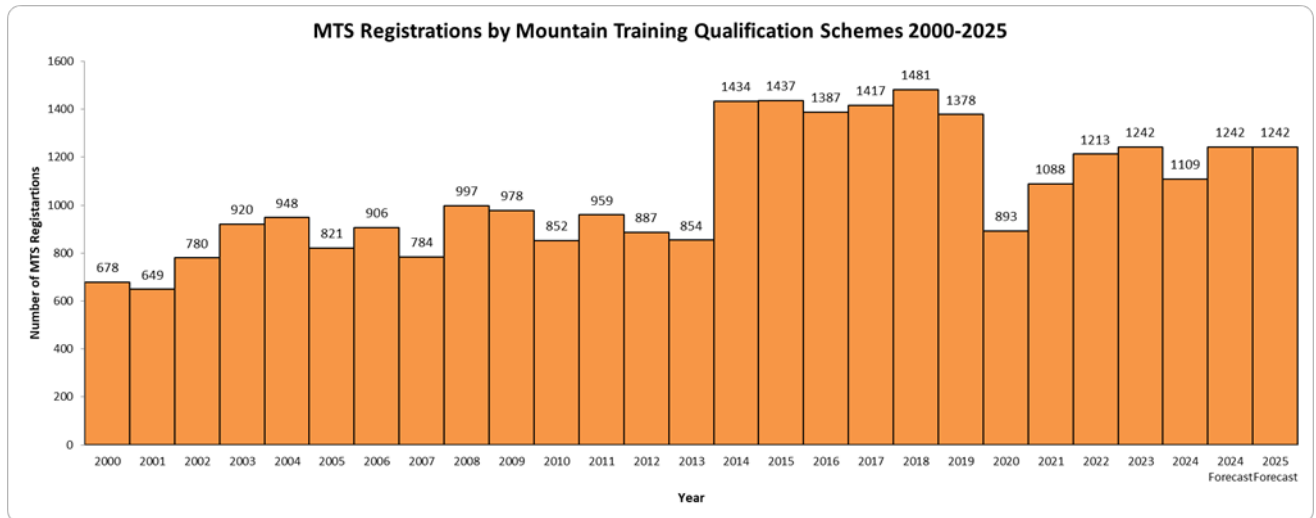


Figure 19 Registrations Qualifications schemes trend 2000-2025

Looking ahead – Registration Trends

Initial registrations for three first three months (Jan-March) of 2025 we are currently on the same number of registrations as the same period last year (2024). Whilst still too early to confidently predict a trend, given the current financial situation within the UK whilst registrations have not increased, neither have they decreased.

Gender balance

In 2024 57% of all registrations (across both qualification and skills schemes) was male; 35% female; and 8% not specified. This balance corresponds positively with membership data from Mountaineering Scotland² where 31.9% of members identify as female, with 0.2% as other, and 2.9% prefer not to say.

Regarding trends, in 2022 the proportion of female candidates registering on MTS Mountain Training schemes increased by 3% compared to 2021. In 2022 39% of all candidates who registered on a Mountain Training scheme with Mountain Training Scotland were female.

In 2023 this proportion reduced from 39% in 2022 to 35% across all schemes, though the % of those 'not specified' increased to 8%.

In 2024 the proportions have remained consistent at 35% of registrations across all schemes being from female candidates, with 8% non-specified.

² Mountaineering Scotland Annual report 2023-2024 page 8

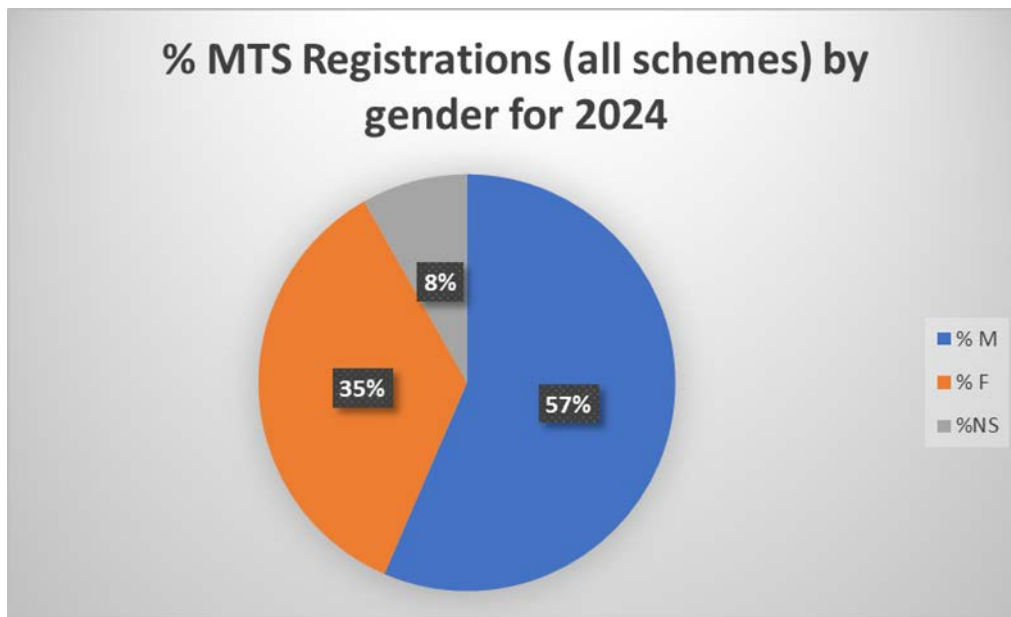


Figure 20 % of registrations (all schemes) by gender in 2024

The % of female or 'not specified' candidates registering on a Mountain Training scheme with Mountain Training Scotland is higher in those schemes with easier to access venues/terrain, such as Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI) - 27% and 13% (40%); Lowland Leader (LWLA) - 49% and 14% (63%), Hill and Moorland Leader (HML) - 50% and 8% (58%) and gradually decreases as you move to the schemes requiring a greater level of resources to commit due to travel to venues – ML Summer – 35% and 3% (38%) and Winter Mountain Leader (WML) which is 26% and 1% (27%) overall. It is worth noting that in 2023 21% and 1% (22%) were female or 'not specified' this increased to 26% and 1% (27%). This indicates a positive trend in the Winter scheme which in 2015 only 9% of candidates were female and slowly rose to 13% in 2022 so the rise to 26% is indicative of a very welcome positive trend.

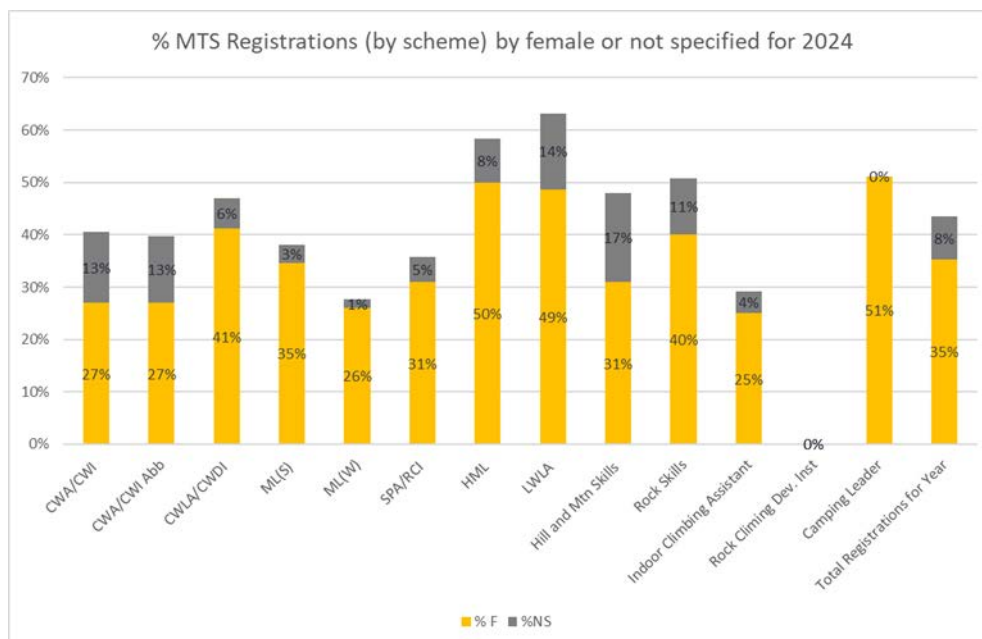


Figure 21 MTS Registrations (all schemes) 2024 % of candidates who are female; gender neutral; not specified

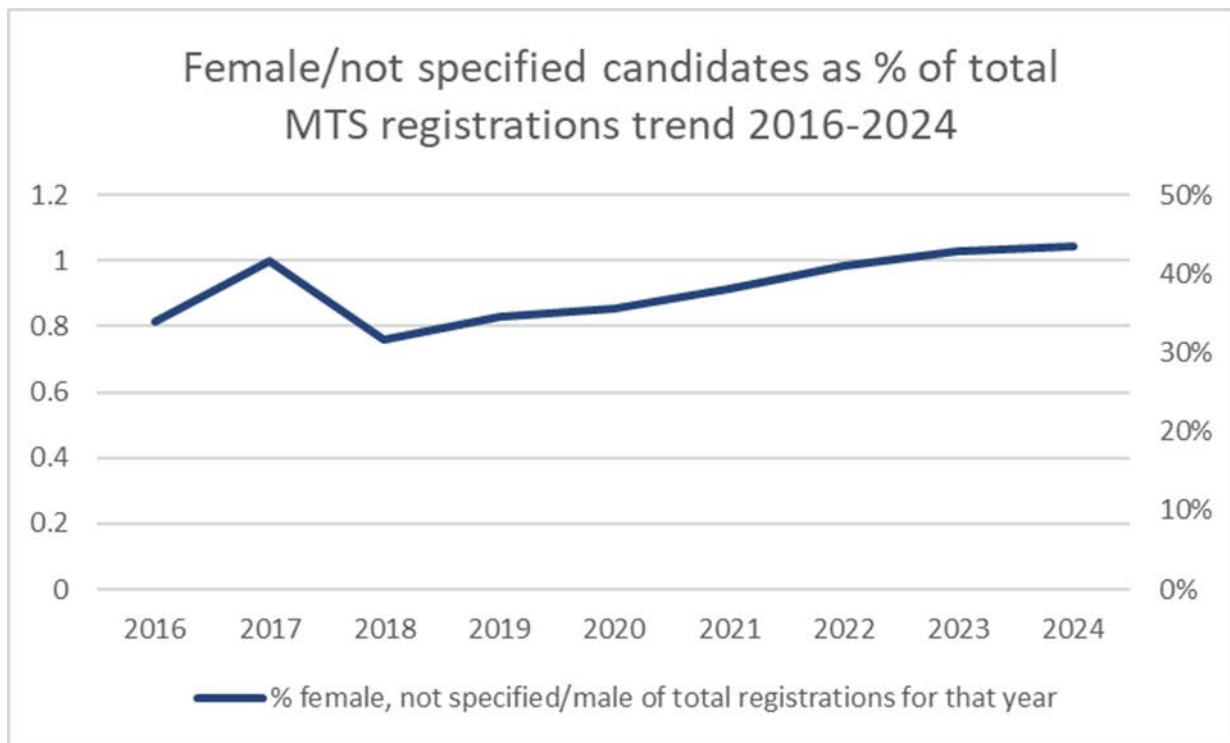


Figure 22 Female/not specified candidates as % of total annual MTS Registrations trend 2016-2024

Conclusions

Overall this decrease in qualification scheme activity, both in registrations and course places completed, is a trend observed with the other national Mountain Training organisations and is thought to be a combination of cost of living crisis and the increases to the registration fees. Providers generally have increased courses prices to reflect tier increased costs (mainly insurance, fuel, and staff fees).

The skills schemes delivered by MTS providers buck the downward trend and continue to increase. Income from these places is limited but it is a welcome trend as these places are undertaken by generally younger candidates who may well go on to become the leaders, instructors or coaches of the future.

Ethnic background

Steady Growth in Representation:

Figure 23 shows the % of MTS candidates from an ethnic background registering on Mountain Training scheme 2017-2024. There has been a marked increase in the proportion of candidates from ethnic backgrounds over the 8-year period—from 0.64% in 2017 to 2% in both 2023 and 2024. This represents a more than threefold increase in representation. The highest levels of representation are recorded in 2023 and 2024, with 2% of all candidates identifying as from an ethnic background. It is interesting to compare with Mountaineering Scotland data which indicates that Black, Asian, African, Mixed, or other ethnic groups make up 2.4% of its members³.

³ Mountaineering Scotland Annual report 2023-2024 page 8

Despite occasional fluctuations in total registrations (particularly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic), the absolute number of ethnic minority candidates has generally risen.

These statistics suggest that initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion may be yielding results. While the overall percentages remain modest, the upward trajectory is encouraging.

However, even at the 2023–2024 peak, ethnic background representation remains relatively low at 2%. This underlines the need for continued, targeted outreach, community engagement, and the removal of barriers to participation. One action currently being undertaken by Mountain Training is working with a range of individuals and organisations to spread the word about our skills courses and qualifications <https://www.mountain-training.org/about/our-people/ambassadors/> The intent is to high highlight success stories and role models from ethnic backgrounds.



Figure 23 % of Candidates from an ethnic background registering on Mountain Training scheme 2017-2024

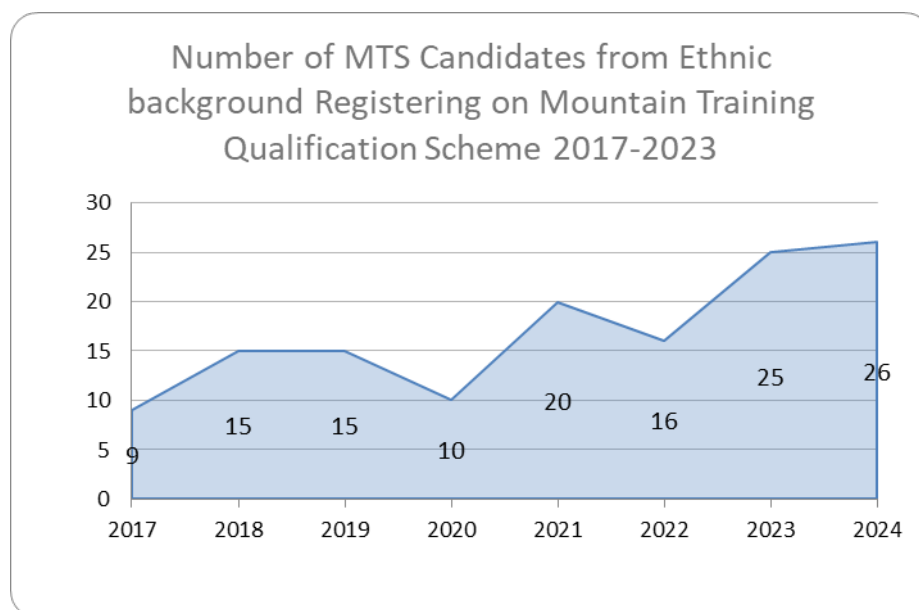


Figure 24 Number of MTS Candidates from ethnic background registering on Mountain training qualification scheme 2017-2024

Training/assessment places

Overall 1264 candidates completed a training/assessment course 2024 compared to 1427 in 2023; an overall decrease of 11.4%.

Compared with pre-covid 2019 of 676 training and 519 assessment places completed (Total 1195)= 5.6% increase overall.

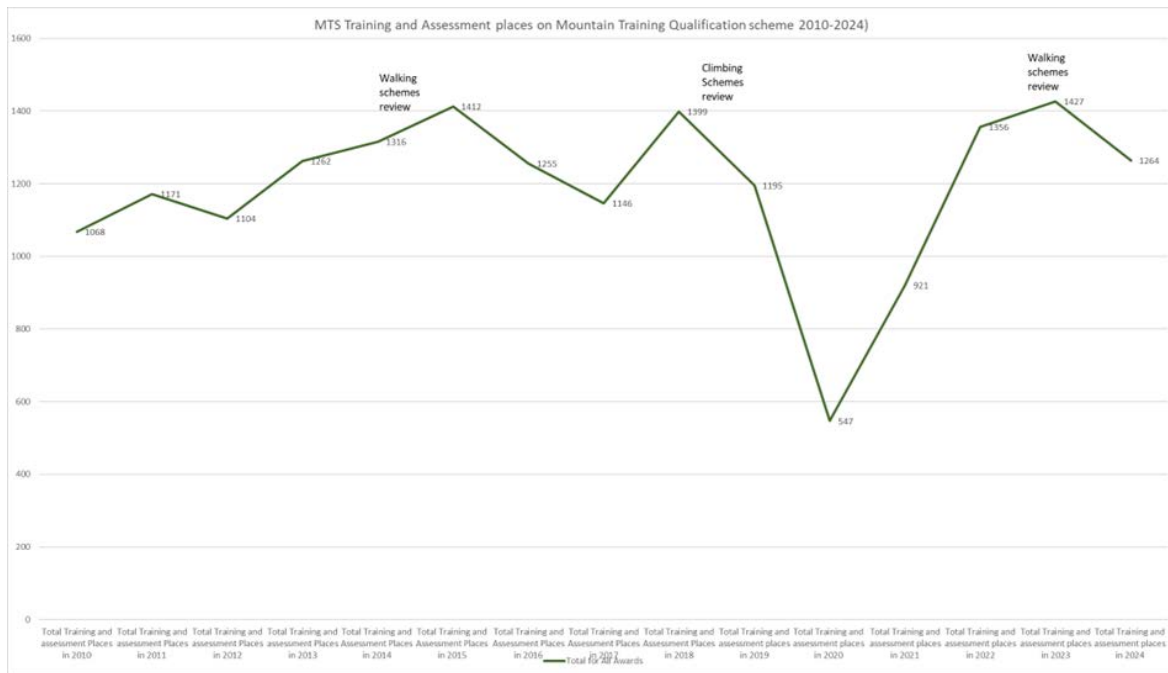


Figure 25 MTS qualification course places completed trend 2010- 2024

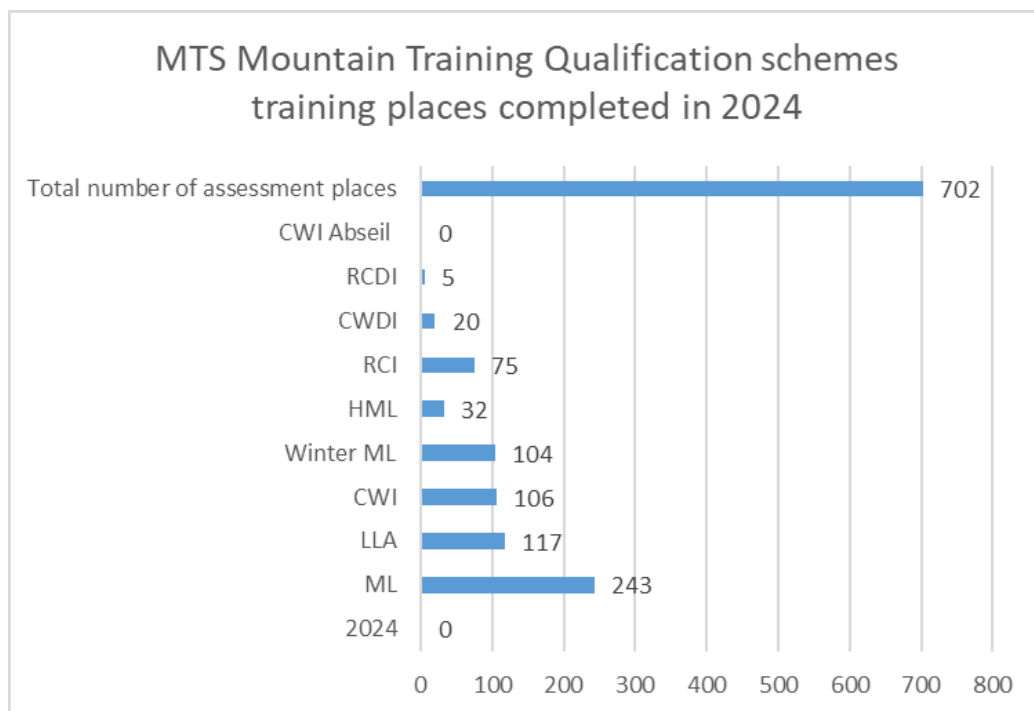


Figure 26 MTS Training places completed in 2024 ranked by scheme

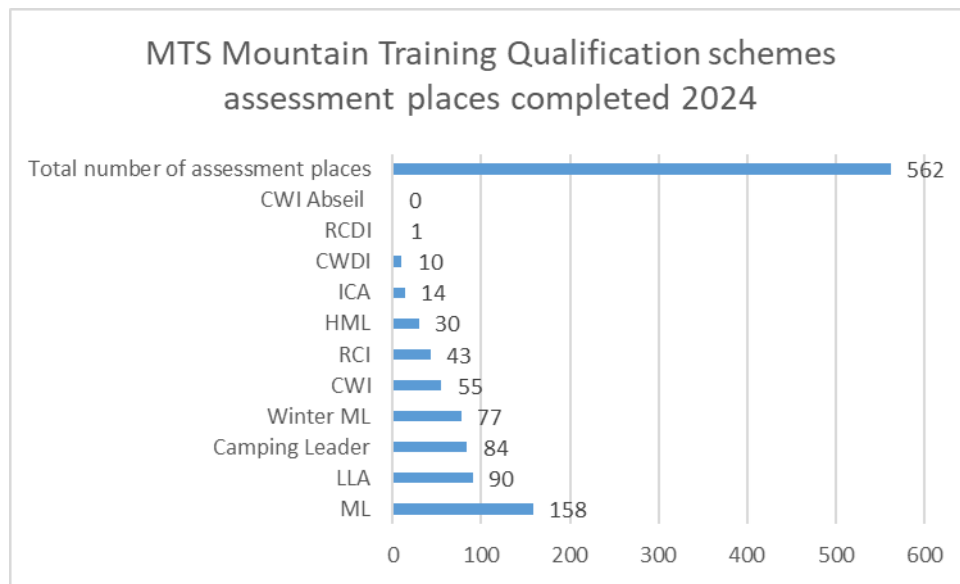


Figure 27 MTS Assessment places completed in 2024

Assessment places completed: 2024 saw 562 candidates complete their **assessment** ; this compares with 2023 when 634 completed assessment; **a decrease of 11.4%.**

Mountain Training skills schemes provision

2024 saw 211 candidates complete a skills scheme training course. This compares with 2023 when 126 candidates completing a place; **an increase of 67.5%!**

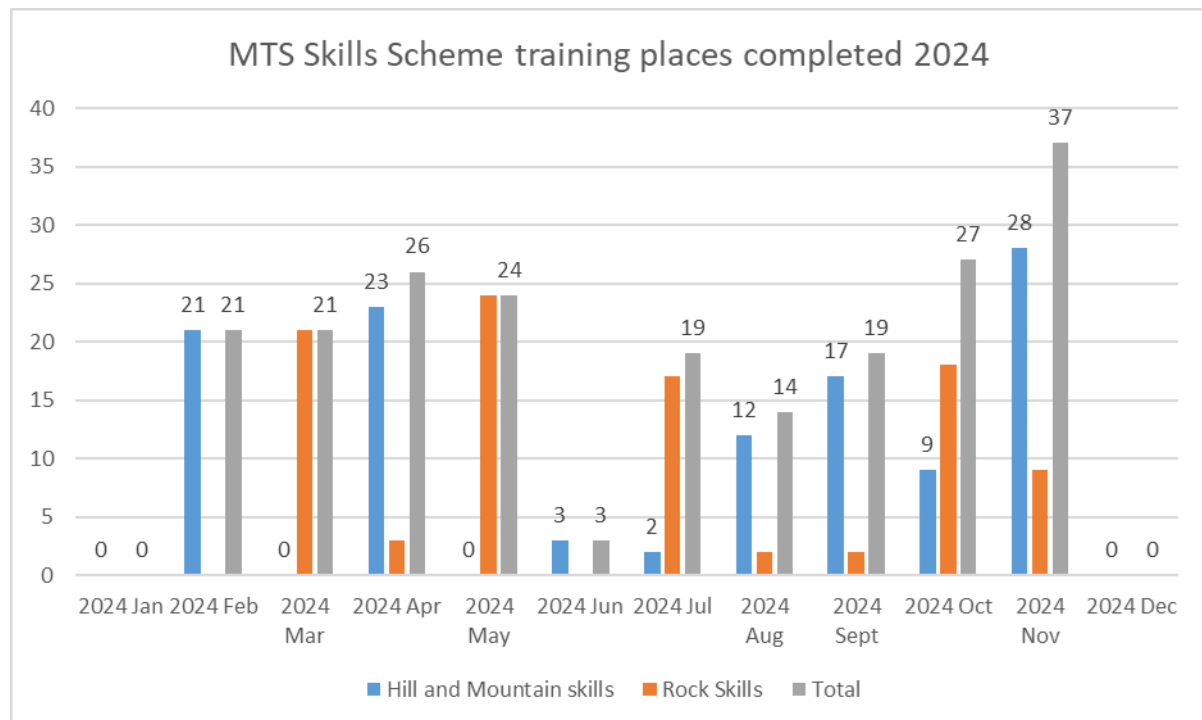


Figure 28 MTS Skills Schemes training places completed 2024



Figure 29 Number of Mountain Training skills scheme MTS training places completed 2017-2024

Looking ahead – Course Places Trends

For the qualification schemes the number of candidates completing a training or assessment course for the first three months of 2025 is 186 training and 72 assessment (total 258) compared with 219 training and 143 assessment (total 362) for the same period in 2024. This is a 33.5% decrease. The cancellation of 10 Winter Mountain Leader training and assessment courses accounts for the significant decrease.

For the skills schemes the number of candidates completing a skills course for the first two months of 2025 is 14 compared with 21 for the same period in 2024.

Too early to confidently predict the overall trend for 2025 (especially with skills scheme places as these are more active in the spring/summer/early autumn in Scotland). A conservative assessment is that at best the number of training/assessment places completed across the schemes will remain on a par with 2024.

Number of led days

MTS providers since 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2025 have qualified 522 candidates.

As a guide, and based on figures from a Mountain Training Association (MTA) Survey 2019 qualified individuals lead on average one day a year with 23 participants, that's potentially 12,006 additional participation days.

Since the period of this strategic plan – 1/4/2027 to the end of this operational year (31/3/2025) MTS providers have qualified 2,880 candidates which potentially equates to 66,240 additional participation days.

Mountain Training Skills Scheme Provision

Those delivering the larger number of training places are working with young people (independent schools and Scouts). Currently MTS has 20 approved skills schemes providers.

Within Scotland the target market for skills scheme providers seems to be Under 18, however this is driven by the fact that schools are delivering the bulk of courses. Scouts' courses are U18 for climbing and mainly over 18 for Hill Skills.

Whilst the Rock Skills Introduction is very successful, the other climbing schemes pose some challenges to run. For example:

Intermediate: Difficult course to staff and run and this is a known issue

Learn to Lead Sport: There is not much accessible sport climbing close to central Scotland).

Learn to Lead Trad: This requires a higher level of Tutor qualification (Rock Climbing Development Instructor or Mountaineering Instructor as minimums) and given the nature of the activity is less likely to happen with younger participants.

The split Male / Female is reasonable, one of the limiting factors for some is availability of female tutors.

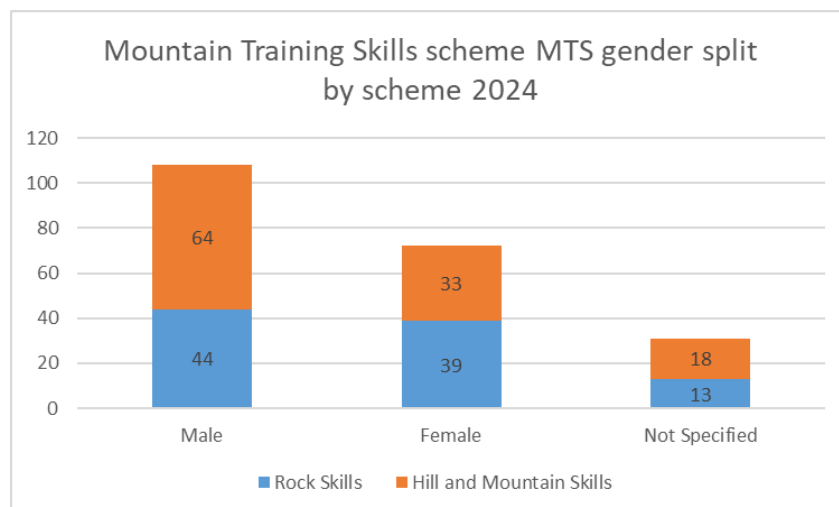


Figure 30 Mountain Training Skills scheme MTS gender split by scheme 2024

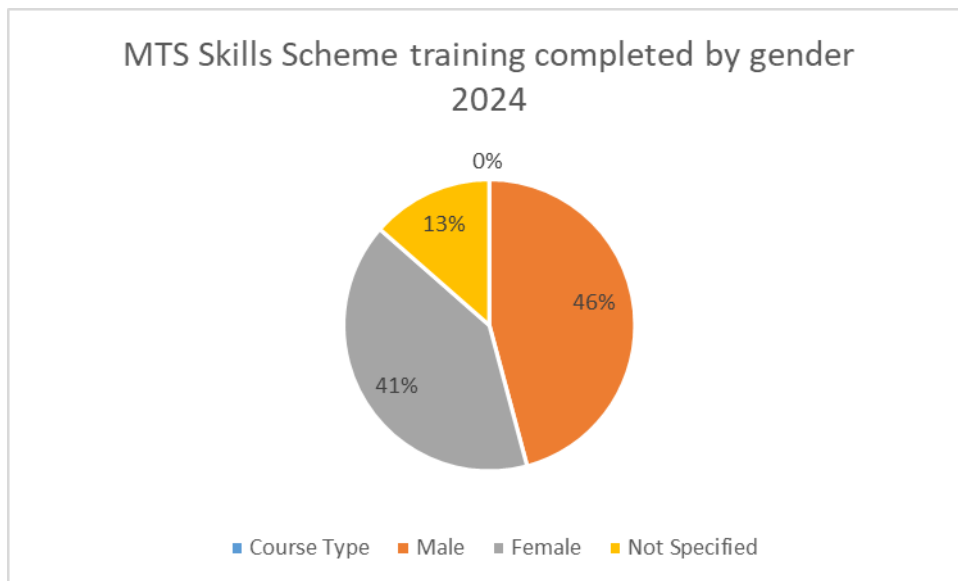


Figure 31 MTS Skills Scheme training completed by gender 2024

Profile

Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Group

Mountain Training Scotland are members of Mountain Safety Group(MSG) whose purpose to monitor, review and promote safe movement and practice in the Scottish mountains; to collaborate on mountain safety issues across Scotland; in order to provide and disseminate safety information through its partner organisations; and, to be the definitive organisation for the provision of mountain safety advice to the outdoor sector in partnership with the Scottish Government and through local and national media outlets. Mountain Training Scotland/Mountain Training support the work of the group by offering a perspective on education and safety training. For information regarding projects undertaken by the group please see this [link](#).

Avalanche Education and SAFOS

Mountain Training Scotland is also involved with the Snow and Avalanche Foundation of Scotland (SAFOS) one of whose key roles is coordinating the development of avalanche education and training in the UK and Ireland. Recent work has focussed on the communication working group. Mountain Training Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and SAIS undertook to create a Be Avalanche Aware e-learning module. This was originally on Teachable but was moved to the new Mountain Training Articulate platform this winter.

Key Aim 3

‘To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland’

Financially secure and resilient

Primary sources of income are fees from candidate registrations, investment from sportscotland, and fees (consisting of annual renewal and course places delivered) from Course Providers who run courses on behalf of Mountain Training Scotland. Registration and course provider fees are agreed and set by the five national Mountain Training organisations via the Finance Group set up under the auspices of MTUKI. Each national Mountain Training organisation contributes a proportion of their income from registrations and courses places completed to MTUKI to fund Mountain Training network specific support e.g. database, customer services team, digital engagement and marketing.

Mountain Training registration fees increase

The one-off registration fee provides access to one of a suite of specific, nationally recognised qualification schemes. In return Mountain Training provide several services, for life, for all candidates. These include the Mountain Training customer service team, a candidate handbook which details the syllabus and guidance notes for each scheme, a full record of a candidate’s training and assessment history on the industry leading candidate management system, as well as access to a digital logbook for candidates to record their experience.

Provider Course place fees increase 1st April 2024

The national Mountain Training organisations charge course place fees through our candidate management system to support our quality assurance commitments.

The course place fees primarily fund each national Mountain Training organisations’ quality assurance, administration and support of each course. After careful consideration and analysis, all the national Mountain Training organisations determined that adjusting our prices is necessary to ensure the continued provision of the Mountain Training schemes and associated services and resources.

Quality is a fundamental principle of the Mountain Training qualifications and while MTS and Mountain Training recognise that there will be a financial impact on our providers and indirectly candidates, we’re not able to continue absorbing increasing costs and risk compromising quality.

The new fees were implemented on 1st April 2024.

Financial Planning

For the purposes of planning 2021/2022 was taken as our baseline.

Figure 25 shows the proportions= with around 71% of our income being derived from registrations and provider activity. The remaining 29% from sportscotland is designated to support development projects.

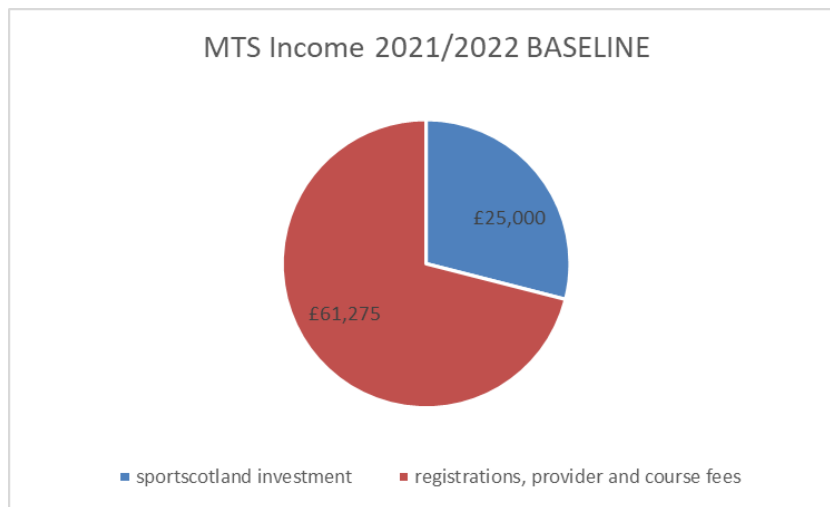


Figure 32 MTS Income makeup 2021/2022 baseline

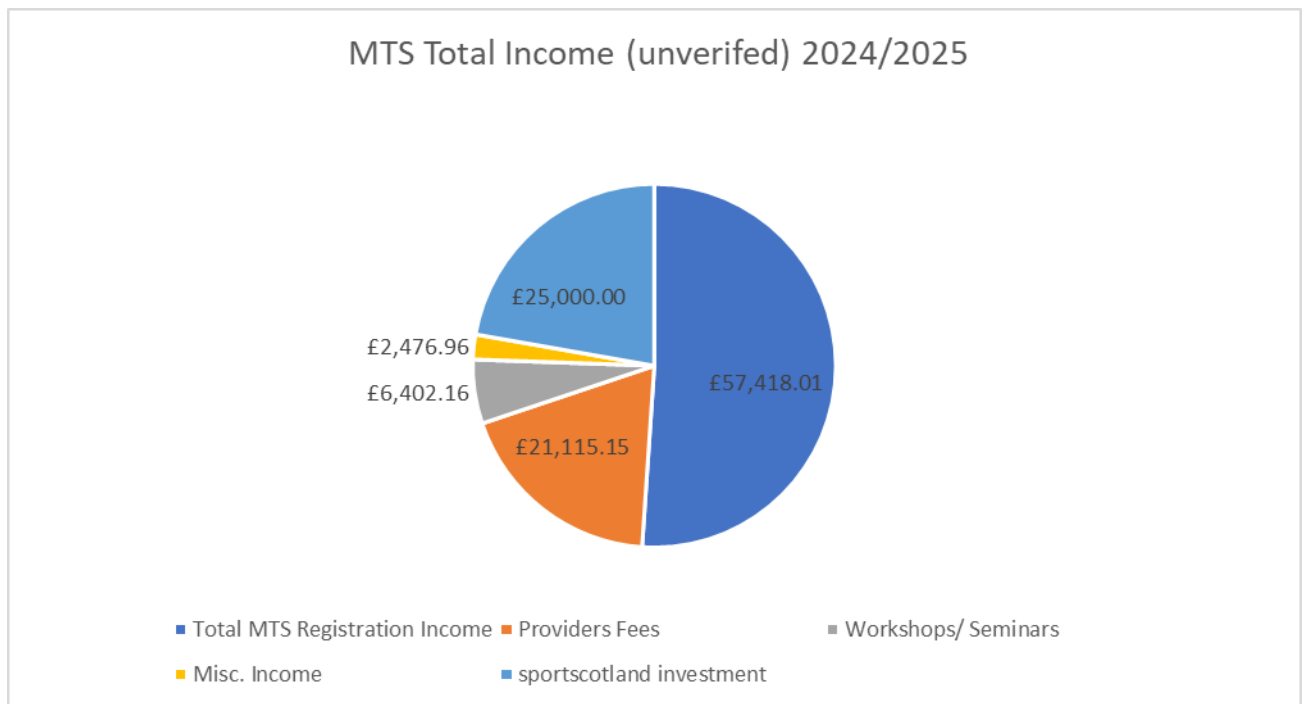


Figure 33 MTS Income makeup 2024/2025

As you can see in 2024-2025 78% of our income was derived from registrations and provider activity.
Note: misc. income is that money from exemptions and admin fee for processing purchase orders etc.

Our median income since 2017 (the start period for our previous strategic plan) is £89,593, whilst our median expenditure is £90,912, with a median loss of -£4,409. Figure 34 shows how our income and expenditure has changed since 2017.

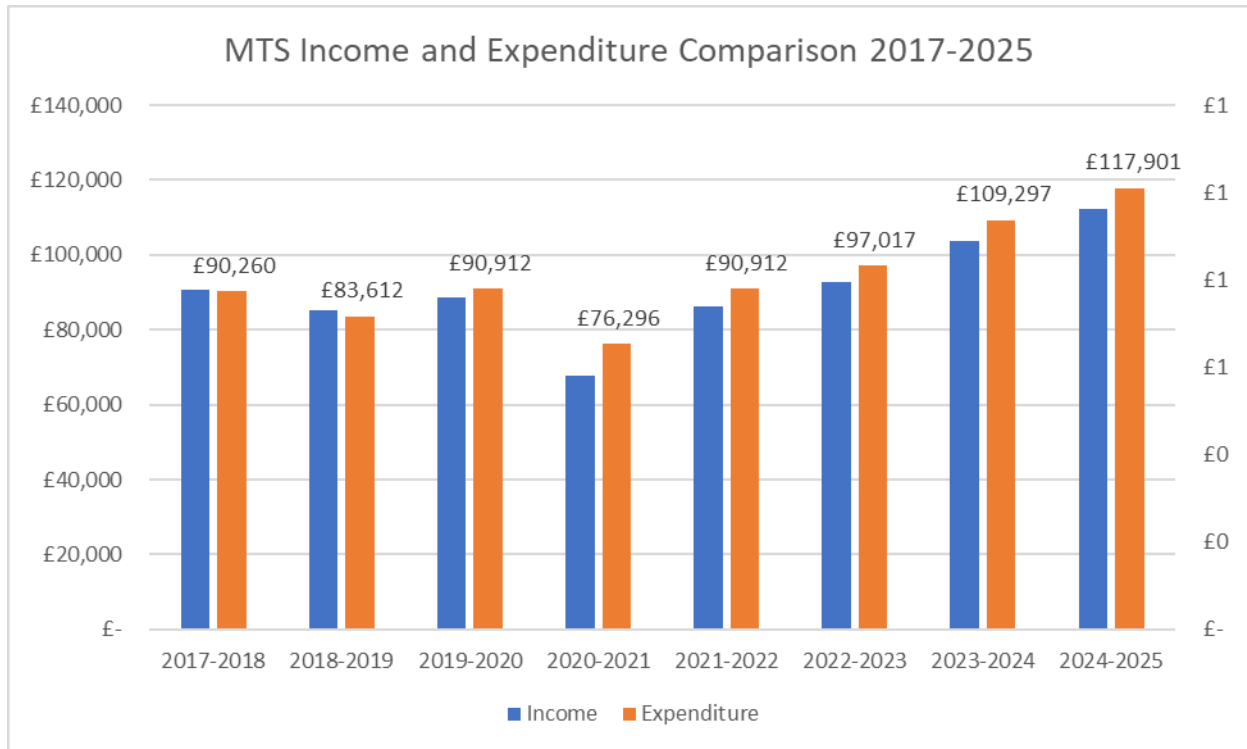


Figure 34 MTS Income and expenditure 2017-2025

Through 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 we had operated with a designated unrestricted fund which included additional money to underwrite development projects, which meant we planned to increase our expenditure and run at a loss for the period 2019 onwards. COVID did mean this loss was greater than anticipated but overall our finances remained in a positive state with our overall income starting to increase slowly since the shock of COVID. However the cost of living crisis and the resulting impact on support costs has started to slowly drive up our expenditure with our income dragging behind.

MTS Operating Costs and income (unverified) 2024/2025

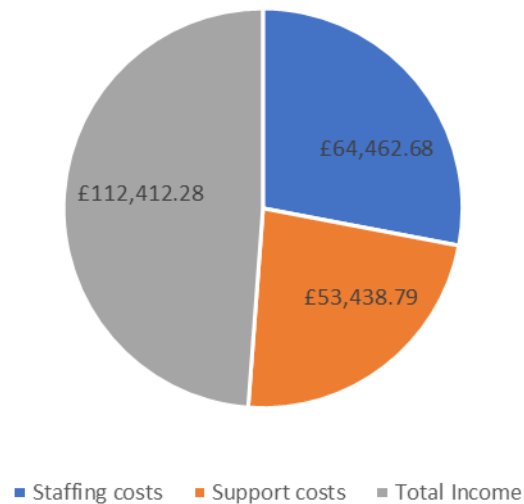


Figure 35 MTS Operating costs and income 2024-2025

In 2024/2025 our overall income was £103,84112,412, whilst our total operating costs (Staffing plus support) were £117,901.47 with us operating at a loss of £5,489.19. This was better than planned for 2024/2025 as partway through the year our revised forecast saw us operating at a loss in the region of £11.3k.

Financial Strategy for 2025-2026

It is clear that continuing to operate at a loss year on year is not sustainable. A variety of factors including an overall increase in costs across the range of expenditure has had an impact. At the same time, the broad scope of work now undertaken by MTS continues to require support from the Financial and Administration assistance, and significant input from the Technical Officer, both in development work and aspects of operational administration. In addition with an expanding provider workforce running specialist training events to support their development, has also meant an increased drawn down on external contractors. In effect all this is to free up time for the Executive Officer to focus on global projects, co-ordinate MTS development projects and manage the overall operation. Our investment money from Sportscotland of £25k agreed back in 2017 would now have to be £32,804 just to maintain the same level of development activity.

The recent increases in the Mountain Training scheme registration and associated course fees payable by Providers did reduce our deficit. Our operational plan for 2025-2026 will also be tightly tailored to our available resources which will mean some tough choices for the Board to make regarding our development and support commitments.

Continue to ensure the continued effective, efficient governance and management of Mountain Training Scotland's affairs

MTS Board non-Executive Director Recruitment

The Board of Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) comprises six non-executive director positions, five of which are currently filled. To support the phased rotation of directors—each eligible to serve for up to six years—the Board sought to appoint a new member to the remaining vacancy. Following a skills audit, the position was advertised, applicants were reviewed, and interviews conducted. As a result, the Board is pleased to welcome Richard Gammage as its newest non-executive director. Richard was formally appointed on 26 March 2025.

KPMG development audit of Mountain Training Scotland

The Board of Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) requested a governance audit from sportscotland, which engaged KPMG LLP to assess MTS's governance arrangements. The purpose of the report is to assist sportscotland in determining the extent to which governance arrangements are suitable to safeguard public investment and deliver outcomes.

KPMG conducted the audit, focusing on fiduciary and reputational matters. The overall conclusion is that MTS's governance is satisfactory, with some comments for improvement. One of the five findings from the development plan has already been addressed. The remaining four findings (one moderate and three low risk) have all been actioned.

The Board of Mountain Training Scotland has implemented the necessary actions to address the outstanding recommendations through our operational plan for 2024/2025.

Staff development and retention

Mountain Training Scotland currently provides additional staff support for the MTS Executive Officer via the roles of the Finance and Administration assistant and the Technical Officer. Both roles are undertaken on a self-employed basis and follow agreed yearly work plans. Additional technical expertise is brought in to deliver bespoke events e.g. the MTS trainer and assessor courses. Often Mountain Training Scotland can and does collaborate with partner organisations to support this specialist support.

Mountain Training Scotland does note that whilst currently the staff network is secure, it is very dependent on one full time employee as key person – the MTS Executive Officer. Whilst working with contracted specialists and partner organisations allows us to deliver on strategic and operational outputs in the short-term Mountain Training Scotland is seeking to ensure longer term formal and resilient solutions within the organisation to provide increased capacity and support to deliver proposed MTS strategic and operational outputs and associated outcomes.

Appendix 1 MTS Strategic Partners

Mountain Training Partners

Mountain Training Partners are national Mountain Training organisations and Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (MTUKI) within the UK and Ireland Mountain Training network that Mountain Training Scotland works with closely. Collectively they are known as Mountain Training.



Figure 36 national Mountain Training organisations

Scottish Key Partners

Key Partners have significant operational and/or financial relationships with Mountain Training Scotland.



sportscotland, the national agency for sport, works with partners (including Mountain Training Scotland and Mountaineering Scotland) to build a world-class sporting system for everyone in Scotland.

sportscotland supports the development of outdoor and adventure sports through its range of national centres, including Glenmore Lodge. **sportscotland's** key outcomes include increased participation and progression in sport.

In relation to these outcomes **sportscotland** invests in Mountain Training Scotland to support its development and implementation of new initiatives and projects. Crucially, this investment enables Mountain Training Scotland to operate beyond basic provision of its core business.



Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Training Centre, operates within the **sportsScotland** family of national centres. Glenmore Lodge defines its core function as supporting and developing leaders, coaches, guides, and instructors.

Its position in terms of staff skills and experience (both personal and of working on a variety of National Governing Body qualification schemes), and resources, makes Glenmore Lodge uniquely equipped to support the core work of Mountain Training Scotland.



Mountaineering Scotland aims to inspire and encourage people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to enjoy mountaineering activities responsibly.

This is achieved through educational programmes and provision of relevant information concerning mountain safety, access, and conservation. Many Mountain Training qualification candidates are drawn from this community of active hillwalkers, mountaineers, and climbers. The profile of Mountain Training qualification candidates reflects the demographic of this community.

A common aim of both organisations is to work together to broaden the diversity of this community, both by ethnicity and gender.

The provision of educational programmes and safety training significantly relies on qualified leaders, instructors, and coaches, whether as volunteers or as professionals.

Mountain Training Scotland supports the mountain safety, access and conservation aims of Mountaineering Scotland by providing trained and qualified leaders, instructors, and coaches through the Mountain Training qualification schemes.




Mountain Training Scotland is also uniquely placed, with its wider links to UK-wide and Ireland-wide organisations through MTUKI, to provide support and advice relating to matters of mountain safety and training.

Appendix 2 Mountain Training Scotland Board

		
Dr Mhairi Anne Crawford Chair (Appointed 3/10/2022; appointed Vice Chair 23/2/2023. Elected Chair 25/5/2023)	Pamela Lomoro Vice Chair (Appointed 29/10/20; elected as Director 20/5/2021, elected Vice Chair 25/5/2023)	Marie Dignam Treasurer (Appointed Treasurer 23/2/2023; elected Treasurer 25/5/2023)
<p>Mhairi has been walking, mountaineering and climbing in Scotland and Europe since an early age and is hugely passionate about anything outdoors be that solo trips or leading a group. When not able to get into the hills, she's swimming, cycling or running.</p> <p>Mhairi brings a range of experience to MTS from more than ten years in industry building on her Physics doctorate, combining interests in STEM, business and equalities and eight as a third sector leader focussed on equalities.</p>	<p>Pamela is a keen mountaineer, competitive amateur distance runner, a qualified running coach, and a keen cyclist. She is passionate about making Scotland's mountains and hills safe, accessible, and inclusive to people from all backgrounds while ensuring environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Pamela holds a PhD in mechanical engineering and has over 10 years' experience of managing large projects in the energy industry and the multisectoral technology research & development field.</p>	<p>Marie is an experienced senior financial reporting manager who has worked across a variety of industries. For the last eight years she has worked in financial services delivering both financial and ESG reporting.</p> <p>With a passion for hill and coastal walking, she is driven to support MTS's aim to encourage sustainable and sympathetic use of the outdoors by all users</p>

		
<p>Patrick Baker</p> <p>Director</p> <p>(Appointed 17/8/21; elected as Director 4/8/2022)</p>	<p>Craig McLaren</p> <p>Director</p> <p>(Appointed Director 24/5/2023)</p>	<p>Richard Gammage</p> <p>Director</p> <p>(Appointed Director 21/3/2025)</p>
<p>Patrick is an experienced communications leader, with in-depth specialism in corporate messaging, sustainability, diversity, social-media promotion and content strategy. He has worked in content delivery roles for over twenty years in both the publishing and financial-services industries. He has also been a contributing writer for publications including The Guardian, The Scotsman, The Herald and TGO Magazine.</p> <p>As a keen mountaineer and paddler, Patrick has been exploring Scotland's mountains and wild places for over twenty years. He is the author of three outdoor-focused books, which include two narrative non-fiction titles and a hillwalking guidebook to several ranges in Central Scotland.</p>	<p>Craig has extensive experience in the outdoor sector, spanning over two decades. He began his journey by volunteering with Venture Scotland, where he discovered his passion for mentoring groups in outdoor settings.</p> <p>This experience inspired him to enroll in the Mountain Leader scheme, and he successfully obtained both his Summer and Winter Mountain Leader qualifications.</p> <p>Presently, he has been serving as the Assistant Outdoor Education Officer for Falkirk Council for 15 years. In this role, he combines his love for the Scottish hills with his enthusiasm for leading and teaching people in a dynamic environment throughout the year.</p>	<p>Richard has spent 40 years exploring Scotland's mountains, leading and training others. A keen cyclist and athlete, he combines a passion for the outdoors with a background in outdoor education, teaching, youth work, and the armed forces.</p> <p>He has and continues to be an advocate for safe outdoor exploration and its many benefits. He holds the Mountaineering Instructor Certificate and two master's degrees.</p> <p>Since 2013, he has worked in the third sector—across sport, education, homelessness, and social housing—as a senior executive and non-executive director. With extensive governance experience, he thrives on making a difference.</p>

Appendix 3 MTS Executive Officer and staff

		
George McEwan Executive Officer	Catherine Rose Part time Administration and Finance Assistant	Sandy Paterson Part time Technical Officer
<p>George started working with MTS in 2012 when he accepted the role of Executive Officer following the retirement of Allen Fyffe the previous Executive Officer.</p> <p>He has had an involvement in the mountaineering and climbing world for over 35 years.</p> <p>George has worked for Outward Bound, as a self-employed Mountaineering Instructor running his own business, and was a Senior Instructor and the Head of Mountaineering at The Scottish National Outdoor centre Glenmore Lodge from 1996-2012.</p> <p>George is based in Strathspey where he lives with his wife and child.</p>	<p>Catherine Rose has been with Mountain Training Scotland for 7 years.</p> <p>Her full-time job is as Finance Manager for a local charity, but she enjoys the challenges working within MTS can bring.</p> <p>She lives locally in Boat of Garten and enjoys exploring the area on either her road or mountain bike.</p>	<p>Sandy is based in the Northeast of Scotland where he lives with his wife and two children.</p> <p>Sandy works all year round as a full-time mountaineering and climbing Instructor and International Mountain Leader running his own company (Scotch on the Rocks Guiding), he is involved in delivery of the majority of the Mountain Training awards from Lowland Leader to Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and the International Mountain Leader.</p> <p>When not in the mountains or on the crags he also works part time as the Development Officer for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors.</p>

Appendix 4 Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members

These are stakeholder organisations that have a significant interest in the Mountain Training qualifications managed and overseen by Mountain Training Scotland. They contribute actively to the management of Mountain Training Scotland by monitoring its activity and giving guidance to the organisation. This includes, collectively, helping to set overall policy, defining and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets via thrice-yearly Council of Members Meetings.

There are currently ten Members of Mountain Training Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland
- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC)
- Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)
- Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI)
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- British Mountain Guides
- Ramblers Scotland
- Girlguiding Scotland
- Scouts Scotland
- British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML)

There are an additional three organisations classed as 'Advisors' as they have the right to speak but do not have a vote at any Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members Meetings.

- Glenmore Lodge National Centre
- Joint Services Mountain Training Wing Ballachulish
- **sportscotland.**

Appendix 5 Mountain Training Personal Skills & Qualification Pathways

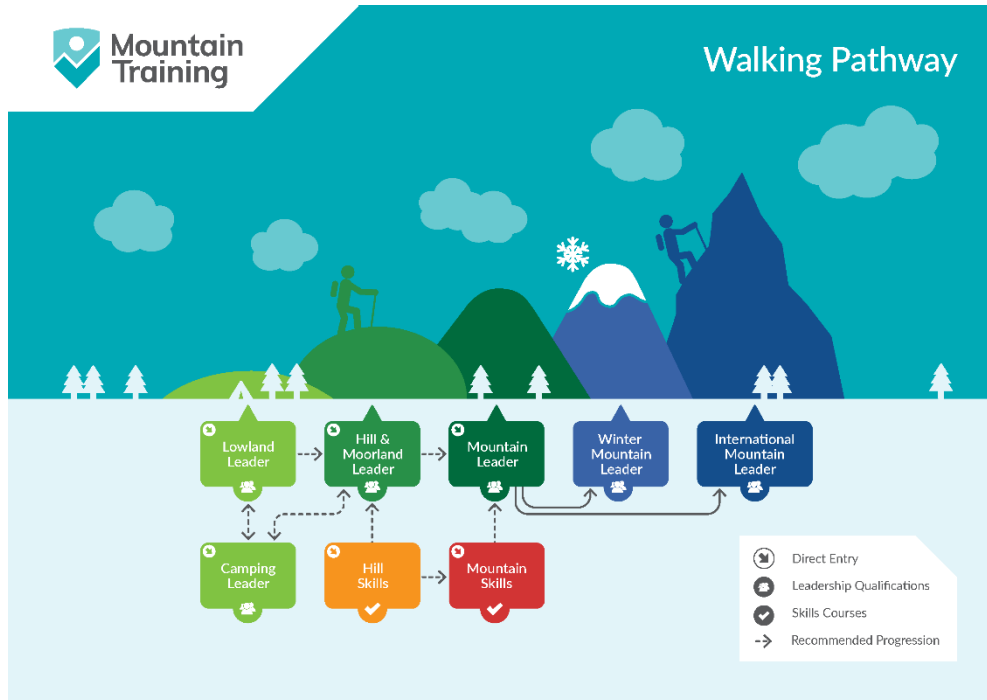


Figure 37 Mountain Training Walking Schemes Pathway

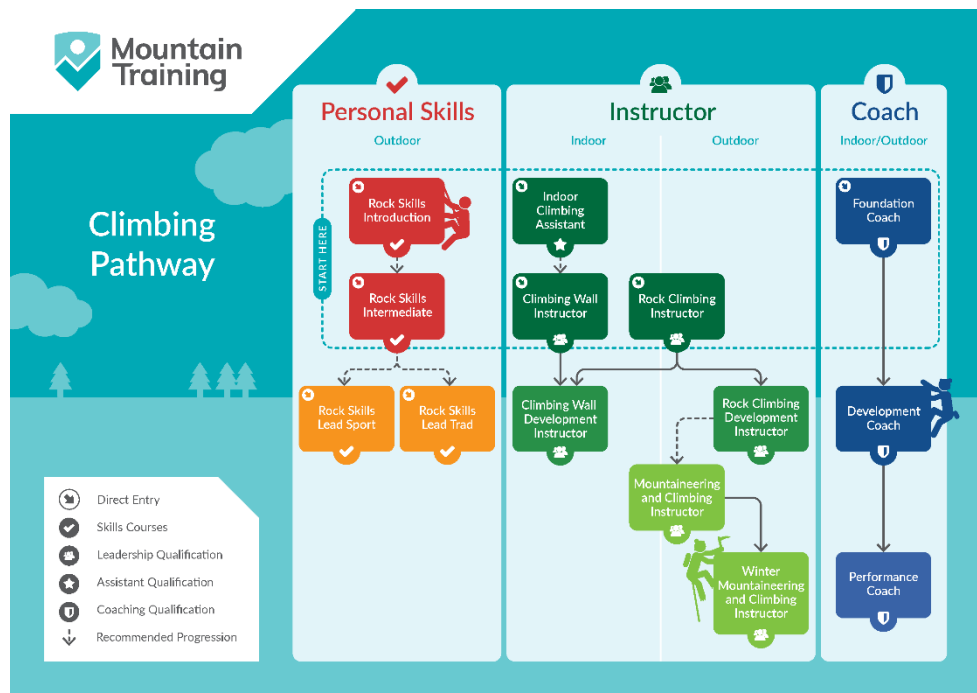


Figure 38 Mountain Training Climbing Schemes Pathway

Appendix 6 Glossary

Mountain Training Scotland (MTS)- A Scottish based charitable body whose purpose is the advancement, for public benefit, of education and training in the skills required for the leadership and instruction of safe mountain related activities, and to offer advice on matters of training and safety. One of five national Mountain Training organisations.

Mountain Training – The collection of five national Mountain Training organisations who are the awarding bodies for skills courses and qualifications in walking, climbing and mountaineering in the UK and Ireland. As the Awarding body network for walking, climbing and mountaineering Mountain Training operates as the ‘training arm’ of the national governing bodies - BMC, Mountaineering Ireland and Mountaineering Scotland. Many of our qualification schemes are approved by Ofqual or the Scottish Qualification Authority and we receive government support for our development work from the respective sports councils across the UK and Ireland. Our individual companies operate on a not-for-profit basis and have the broadest range of stakeholder organisations involved in the management and development of our qualifications. It serves to create a “one stop shop” for candidates to interact with via the Mountain Training website and the associated Candidate Management System – the database that stores all candidate registration and qualification records. Candidates can register on a range of personal skills training and qualification schemes using the same candidate account.



Figure 39 Rock Climbing Instructor candidates on a training course at Kingussie Upper Crag

Mountain Training United Kingdom & Ireland (MTUKI) - “The role of Mountain Training UK & Ireland is to coordinate the shared objectives of the national Mountain Training organisations.” It is also one of the five national Mountain Training organisations. In effect MTUKI co-ordinates the role and work of national Mountain Training organisations, and the wider Mountain Training network which in addition to the national Mountain Training organisations includes AMI, BAIML, BMG and MTA, across the UK and Ireland.



Figure 40 Mountain Training Network (MTUKI Council Members)

National Mountain Training organisations – there are five national Mountain Training organisations, all of which are Members of Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (Commonly referred to as MTUKI). Each national Mountain Training organisation is solely responsible for overseeing and managing the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in their home country. The five organisations are:

- Mountain Training UK and Ireland
- Mountain Training Cymru (Wales)
- Mountain Training England
- Mountain Training Scotland
- Mountain Training Board Ireland

Course Provider – approved entities (organisation or individual) responsible for ensuring, amongst other matters, that courses, training, and systems supplied by the Provider are strictly in accordance with the procedures set out in the MTS Quality Manual and as detailed in the Provider Agreement.

Tutor - national Mountain Training organisation approved individuals used by national Mountain Training organisation approved Course Providers to ‘front up’ Mountain Training personal skills training courses. The Tutor’s key role is to manage the effective facilitation of the personal skills training syllabus during the provision of a course.

Course Director – national Mountain Training organisation approved individuals used by national Mountain Training organisation approved Course Providers to ‘front up’ these training and assessment courses. The Course Director’s key role is to manage the effective facilitation of the qualification syllabus during the provision of a course.

Trainer and Assessor – suitably and appropriately qualified, skilled, and experienced staff who assist the Tutor/Course Director on a personal skills training and qualification training/assessment course.

Candidates – are individuals who have registered on a Mountain Training personal skills scheme or qualification scheme. They may or may not be on a Mountain Training qualification scheme pathway.

Leaders – a generic term for candidates who hold one or more of the Mountain Training walking qualifications, for example Lowland Walking Leader, and who use their qualification to lead groups.

Instructors – a generic term for candidates who hold one or more Mountain Training climbing qualifications and use their qualification to supervise/teach/instruct climbing to groups/individuals.

Mountain Training Association (MTA) – this is a membership body that candidates who, at a minimum, have completed training in a Mountain Training qualification scheme (trainees), or are qualified can choose to join for an annual fee. The MTA support and encourage professional standards via promoting voluntary Continuing Personal Development opportunities and offer a mentorship programme for trainees.

Professional Associations – these are constituted associations and include:

The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI)

British Mountain Guides (BMG)

British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML)

They represent the interests of their members; maintain professional standards via compulsory Continuing Professional and Personal Development. In some cases, notably British Mountain Guides and British Association of International Mountain Leaders, membership is compulsory to be able to legally work abroad.

Workforce – a generic term used to describe qualified leaders and instructors who undertake formal activity, either individually (e.g. self-employed), and/or on behalf of an organisation (e.g. club, informal group, education authority, mountaineering council etc) either in a voluntary or paid capacity. This formal activity may take place with a group (anything from 2 people upwards) to individuals.



Figure 41 Candidates being trained on their leadership during a Winter Mountain Leader steep ground journey in Glen Coe