



# MOUNTAIN TRAINING SCOTLAND STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

Working with our key partners in Scotland,  
the UK and Ireland



# Mountain Training Scotland

## Strategic Plan 2022-2026

### Introduction

This document details the strategic vision for how Mountain Training Scotland, as an awarding body of the Mountain Training nationally recognised personal skills training and qualification schemes, will continue to deliver on its mission and purpose for the next four years, contingent on the changing external environment of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Success will heavily depend on collaboration with key partners, in both a Scottish and United Kingdom and Ireland context. Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (MTUKI), whose key role is to co-ordinate common objectives of all the national Mountain Training organisations, is a significant and essential component in our work to achieve these aims.

The detail of how we will achieve these strategic aims is contained within annual Operational Plans.

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>About Mountain Training Scotland</b> .....	7
Mountain Training Scotland.....	7
<b>Purpose</b> .....	8
<b>Vision, Mission and Ethos</b> .....	9
<b>Vision</b> .....	9
<b>Mission</b> .....	9
<b>Ethos</b> .....	9
<b>Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan Overview</b> .....	10
<b>Our Intent</b> .....	10
<b>Strategic Key Aim 1</b> .....	10
‘To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	10
<b>Strategic Key Aim 2</b> .....	10
‘To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to mountain training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	10
<b>Strategic Key Aim 3</b> .....	11
‘To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland’ .....	11
<b>Our Values and Principles</b> .....	11
<b>Values</b> .....	11
<b>Principles</b> .....	11
<b>Strategic Key Aim 1</b> .....	12
‘To enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	12
<b>What?</b> .....	12
Focus on course provision.....	12

Ensuring scheme pathway and provision resilience.....	12
<b>Why?</b> .....	13
COVID 19 disruption.....	13
To meet increased demand .....	13
To mitigate impact of any disruption to course provision and resulting impact on candidate pathway progression/completion .....	14
On-line learning resources support candidate pathway when physical attendance can be problematic.....	14
Leader and instructor workforce – professional volunteers and outdoor professionals .....	15
Community of Practice and influence on scheme consistency and excellence .....	16
<b>How?</b> .....	17
<b>1.1. Co-ordination</b> .....	17
<b>1.2 Development</b> .....	18
<b>1.3 Consistency</b> .....	18
<b>1.4 Community of Practice</b> .....	19
<b>1.5 Pathways:</b> .....	19
<b>1.6 Sustainability</b> .....	19
<b>1.7 Resilience:</b> .....	20
<b>Strategic Key Aim 2</b> .....	21
‘To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	21
<b>What?</b> .....	21
Equality and equity of access to Mountain Training schemes.....	21
Candidate Pathway .....	21
Leadership, and safe self-reliant participation, supporting education, health and wellbeing.....	21
<b>Why?</b> .....	22
Ensure workforce representative of society .....	22

The qualification courses that involve the shortest time (i.e. to under go training and assessment, and involve the most accessible ‘terrain’) are the most balanced. That is Lowland Leader, and the Hill and Moorland Leader. The Summer Mountain Leader has seen a significant positive increase in the balance from 25% F/M in 2015 to 38% F/M in 2021. This has steadily increased year on year. ....	24
Ensure equality of access .....	24
Develop self -reliance and responsibility in the outdoors .....	25
<b>How?</b> .....	25
<b>2.1 Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion</b> .....	26
<b>2.2 Connect with new and returning leaders</b> .....	26
<b>2.3 Profile</b> .....	28
<b>Key Aim 3</b> ‘To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland’ .....	29
<b>What?</b> .....	29
Financially secure and resilient .....	29
Staff development and retention.....	29
<b>Why?</b> .....	29
Three roles .....	29
Financial limitations .....	29
Staff capacity and support .....	30
<b>How?</b> .....	31
<b>3.1. Financially secure and resilient</b> .....	31
<b>3.2 Staff development and retention</b> .....	31
<b>Outcomes</b> .....	32
<b>Key Aim 1</b> .....	32
‘To enhance the provision of mountain training, personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	32
Co-ordination .....	32

Development .....	32
Consistency.....	33
Community of Practice.....	33
Pathways.....	33
Sustainability.....	34
<b>Key Aim 2.....</b>	<b>34</b>
‘To progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to mountain training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland’ .....	34
Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion .....	34
Connect with new and returning leaders.....	35
Profile .....	35
<b>Key Aim 3.....</b>	<b>35</b>
‘To ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland’ .....	35
Financially secure and resilient.....	35
Staff development and retention.....	36
<b>Appendix 1 MTS Registrations on Mountain Training Qualification Schemes .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix 2 MTS Registrations % Female/male by scheme in 2019 .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Training and Assessment Places .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendix 4 Mountain Training Personal Skills Training and Qualification schemes.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 5 Mountain Training Scotland in Scotland, the UK and Ireland .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Mountain Training Partners.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>national Mountain Training organisations .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Scottish Key Partners .....</b>	<b>46</b>
sportscotland .....	46
Mountaineering Scotland .....	46

Glenmore Lodge .....	47
<b>Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>49</b>
• Mountain Training UK and Ireland .....	50
• Mountain Training Cymru (Wales) .....	50
• Mountain Training England.....	50
• Mountain Training Scotland .....	50
• Mountain Training Board Ireland .....	50

## 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-related<sup>1</sup> 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 currently managed by a Board of five 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## 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.

# Vision, Mission and Ethos

## Vision

A community of inspirational outdoor leaders, instructors and coaches, representative of a diverse and active society, developed and supported by innovative and sustainable mountain-related personal skills training and qualification schemes.

## Mission

To inspire and enable innovative leadership and ensure consistent quality in the provision of the nationally recognised Mountain Training personal skills training and leadership qualification schemes in Scotland.

## Ethos

We believe in:

- 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.
- High quality training and assessment delivered by experienced and supportive practitioners.
- Developing independent walkers, climbers and mountaineers who practice and encourage, sustainable and sympathetic use of the outdoors by all users.
- 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 if trained appropriately.
- Good leadership is about more than decision making and technical skill; it is about supporting and developing individuals.
- Inspiring people to enjoy walking, climbing and mountaineering with confidence and skill.
- supporting and encouraging sustainable and sympathetic use of the outdoors by all users.

# Mountain Training Scotland Strategic Plan Overview

## Our Intent

Our intent is to enhance enhancing 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 this strategic plan will see us well on the way to achieving this goal by 2026.

There are three strategic key aims:

## Strategic Key Aim 1

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

- Co-ordination
- Development
- Consistency
- Community of Practice
- Pathways
- Sustainability

## Strategic Key Aim 2

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

- Diversity
- Connect with new and returning leaders
- Profile

## Strategic Key Aim 3

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

- Secure income to fund Mountain Training Scotland core work programmes

## 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.

# STRATEGIC AIMS 2022-2026

## Strategic Key Aim 1

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

### What?

Focus on course provision

We will continue to ensure the consistent quality, relevance, and excellence of provision of Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland. They will continue to meet the needs of a variety of users, including public, voluntary and private sector; of volunteers and professionals.

Ensuring scheme pathway and provision resilience

Working with partners and stakeholders, we will ensure the activities of our Providers, and our scheme pathways, are resilient and sustainable and that present needs are met without compromising future needs of the outdoor sector/community.

We will focus on creating digital on-line resources to supporting provision and candidate pathway progression with accessible quality on-line resources.

We will continue to ensure the consistent provision of qualified, competent, and experienced leaders and instructors to meet the evolving workforce needs of the outdoor sector in Scotland.

## Why?

### COVID 19 disruption

On the 11 Mar 2020 the World Health Organisation made the assessment that COVID-19 could be characterized as a pandemic. The devolved governments of the UK introduced 'lockdown' measures on the 23 March 2020. Whilst these measures were relaxed in the early summer of 2020, there have been various restrictions in effect which have had an impact on course provision and attendance. COVID-19 has not just been a public health crisis, but one that has touched every aspect of our lives. Despite positive measures such as vaccination, the outlook for the next few years indicates potential for periods of on-going disruption.

MTS has planned for the contingency that long term disruption due to COVID, will be a backdrop to course provision over the next three to four years.

### To meet increased demand

Between 2017 and 2020, 4,287 candidates were trained and assessed by circa 25- Mountain Training Scotland Providers (Appendix 3). During the corresponding period 5169 candidates registered<sup>2</sup> with Mountain Training Scotland on one or more Mountain Training qualification schemes (Appendix 3).

These numbers compare with 5223 training and assessment places and 5112 registrations for the previous four-year period 2013 to 2016.

The impact of COVID on MTS and the provision of the Mountain Training schemes was a 58% reduction in qualification scheme registrations in 2020, with the number attending a

---

<sup>2</sup> Registration on any of our qualifications has no associated time limit for completing the qualification. This means candidates can register years before doing their training or even completing their assessment, hence the discrepancy between the numbers for those undertaking training and/or assessment in the same period 2010-2015. In addition, completion on some schemes, for example Winter Mountain Leader can take several years due to the challenges of developing sufficient quality personal experience for assessment.

training course down by 63%, and an 83% reduction in the number of those who attended and passed an assessment. Many existing qualified leaders and instructors found themselves unable to practice their profession and left the outdoors to take up jobs in other sectors.

The overall impact for the outdoor sector has been a significant and on-going shortfall in the number of qualified leaders and instructors. This continues to have a negative impact on the formal provision of outdoor mountain-related activity. It is forecasted that by 2026 these numbers will have gradually increased as candidates whose progress through the schemes had been disrupted resume their journey, and new candidates enter the pathway due to demand for renewed demand for qualified leaders and instructors.

To mitigate impact of any disruption to course provision and resulting impact on candidate pathway progression/completion

52% (fourteen) of the current twenty-seven MTS Mountain Training personal skills training and/or qualification scheme approved provider network are self-employed or micro business owners, whose private business is their main source of income. Currently 55% (thirty-one) of MTSs fifty-six Course Directors and Tutors are self-employed.

The impact of COVID and dynamically evolving Scottish Government restrictions and guidance to combat it created practical challenges for scheme provision. Those Providers who were self-employed/micro-businesses proved themselves not only resilient, but very adaptable at responding to every changing situation. From the very first day course provision could resume they were the first providers to begin safely and successfully running courses.

On-line learning resources support candidate pathway when physical attendance can be problematic

COVID restrictions (especially on use of indoor spaces and travel) influenced a move away from face-to-face indoor teaching, to on-line contact. To support this MTS started to create

on-line learning resources. Initial resources proved very popular and indicated a desire and need for on-line learning support by our candidates and the wider professional mountain community. Interactive on-line learning resources allowed individuals to continue being involved in their pathway by pursuing relevant knowledge-based learning on-line.

### Leader and instructor workforce – professional volunteers and outdoor professionals

Mountain Training qualifications are used by a variety of organisations and individuals in the outdoor sector to lead, teach and instruct a variety of mountain-related activities. Mountain Training Scotland candidates – the future leaders and instructors - are drawn from the wider walking, climbing and mountaineering communities, many of whom are represented by Mountaineering Scotland, and to a certain extent, reflect the diversity within that wider community.

To register on the core Mountain Training qualification schemes<sup>3</sup> candidates must also be members of one of the mountaineering councils. These qualified leaders, in turn, contribute significantly to the numbers of people participating in mountain-related activities.

As a guide, figures from a Mountain Training Association (MTA) Survey 2019<sup>4</sup> report that nearly 47% of MTA members report that they use their qualifications as a freelance instructor, and 32% as an employee. In the same survey 43% report they also used their qualifications in a voluntary capacity. There is an overlap between those who use their qualifications in paid capacity and those who volunteer.

Each qualified leader works with, on average, 234 clients per year. 40% of respondents reported that 44-45% of their time is spent working with school age participants, such as Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, on lowland, and hill/moorland terrain, with 37% spending 40% of their time working with such groups in mountainous terrain. There is a

---

<sup>3</sup> The exceptions to this in the qualification schemes provided by MTS are the Lowland Leader, Winter Mountain Leader, the Indoor Climbing Assistant, Rock Climbing/Indoor Climbing Development Instructor schemes

<sup>4</sup> Survey polled existing MTA members of whom 911 responded.



widespread involvement with various other school age groups, such as Scouts, Girl Guides, Cadets, schools, and NICAS across both walking and climbing (indoor and outdoor). The largest group in this context being secondary schools with 21% of respondents reporting they worked with secondary schools groups across the range of disciplines spending on average 25% of their time working with such groups.

Working with adult groups was the next single largest group MTA members worked with and spent the most of their time with. Mountain walking (72% of their time), hill and moorland walking (55%) and lowland walking (48%) being the most common activities, with climbing (indoor and outdoor 42.5%) and winter walking (41%) being the next most common activities.

Using the figures for Mountain Training Scotland for candidates who passed a Mountain Training qualification in 2019 (pre impact from COVID), which is 444 candidates and assuming the 444 candidates only lead one day a year with 23 participants, that's 10,212 additional participation days each year.

#### Community of Practice and influence on scheme consistency and excellence

Since its creation in 1964 Mountain Training Scotland has developed a reputation for excellence in the provision of Mountain Training qualification training and assessment courses. This is primarily through the efforts of successive generations of Mountain Training Scotland course Providers and their staff. Many of those currently involved have longstanding experience of the delivery of the Mountain Training qualifications. This accumulated knowledge, wisdom and experience is a key asset of Mountain Training Scotland and is crucial to ensuring a sustainable provision of consistent, high quality Mountain Training courses in Scotland. A key priority is to maintain these standards and enhance this reputation, whilst remaining relevant to the needs of current and prospective users – both candidates and organisations.

Many of the activities of Mountain Training Scotland courses take place in natural and wild land environments of Scotland. Wild land areas are especially vulnerable to inappropriate

and excessive use. A key role our qualified leaders and instructors play is being ambassadors of good practice in responsible and sustainable access and use of the outdoors.

## How?

Mountain Training Scotland oversees and manages a course provision franchise, with its portfolio of qualification courses delivered through a network of approved Course Providers. These Providers run Mountain Training personal skills training and/or qualification courses according to guidance and supporting procedures contained in the relevant Mountain Training Scotland Provider & Course Director Quality Manual.

In Key Aim 1 Mountain Training Scotland will enhance the provision of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland by:

### 1.1. Co-ordination

1.1.1 Maintain and further develop an effective level of co-operation across the UK and Ireland through collaborating with the five national Mountain Training organisations via MTUKI and the national Mountain Training organisation technical staff network.

1.1.2 Develop and maintain effective partnership working with key strategic partners Mountaineering Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and sportscotland, through collaboration, to ensure a collective Scottish context is represented on UK and Ireland mountain and related issues.

1.1.3 Maintain and develop effective partnership working with the Council of Members of Mountain Training Scotland by collectively, helping to set overall policy, defining and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.

## 1.2 Development

1.2.1 In collaboration with MTUKI review, develop and implement the outcomes of the Mountain Training Walking Schemes Review.

1.2.2 In collaboration with MTUKI continue to monitor, and if required, review specific personal skills training and qualification schemes and their suitability for identified target audiences.

1.2.3 Extend the recognition of Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes within Scotland and the UK and Ireland by further consideration of educational and recreational contexts and opportunities for candidates.

## 1.3 Consistency

1.3.1 Ensure consistency in Scotland of the provision, and associated standards, of Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes by implementing a robust quality assurance programme in co-operation with national Mountain Training organisations and Mountain Training Scotland Course Providers and their staff.

1.3.2 Ensure candidate and Course Provider experiences when working with Mountain Training Scotland are consistent with Mountain Training UK and Ireland-wide standards and protocols, by utilising central resources such as the Mountain Training website, Candidate Management System (CMS) and Mountain Training Customer Services Team.

1.3.3 Oversee the development and provision of the Winter Mountain Leader scheme, in co-operation with MTUKI and the national Mountain Training organisations to ensure relative qualification standard and pathway links maintained between other Mountain Training qualification schemes.

## **1.4 Community of Practice**

1.4.1 Maintain and develop a dynamic and innovative community of practice amongst Mountain Training Scotland Providers and their associated staff supported by a programme of workshops and seminars providing further training and promoting discussion and sharing of knowledge, information and experience.

1.4.2 Create an open pathway, involving both informal and formal processes, to support an individual's journey from qualification holder working on courses through to Course Director.

## **1.5 Pathways:**

1.5.1 Identify and create accessible pathways to support and enable candidates to develop their interests within mountain and climbing related activities

1.5.2 Support Mountaineering Scotland in developing pathways and associated training aims for participants in mountain-related activities by collaborating on:

- creating an infrastructure of qualified personal skills training providers in Scotland
- shared accessible and relevant resources.

## **1.6 Sustainability**

1.6.1 Support, encourage and promote the principles of "Leave No Trace" amongst Mountain Training Scotland Course Providers, associated staff, candidates, leaders and instructors.

1.6.2 Support Mountaineering Scotland and other relevant organisations on projects to protect and maintain access rights.

1.6.3 In collaboration with MTUKI, Mountaineering Scotland and identified third sector partners support safe, environmentally friendly, and sustainable participation in mountain-related activities.

## **1.7 Resilience:**

1.7.1 To support reliance of both provider network and candidate pathway to avoid or minimise disruption due to external events e.g. COVID.

1.7.1 In collaboration with MTUKI continue to develop and implement on-line/digital learning resources 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.

## Strategic Key Aim 2

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

### What?

Equality and equity of access to Mountain Training schemes

Mountain Training Scotland will ensure that equality and equity of access, and the needs of the diverse Scottish population, are given due regard in the implementation and development of all its policies, programmes and services, including access to the Mountain Training schemes pathways.

Mountain Training Scotland will comply with its statutory and legislative obligations to eliminate discrimination and increase equality in sport and recreation. It will remain informed of new developments in terms of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. In addition, it will promote gender equality, racial equality and disability equality for all candidates wishing to participate in the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes.

Candidate Pathway

We will seek to connect with new, returning and qualified leaders by providing them with, and signposting them to, appropriate continued personal development pathways.

We will work to raise the profile of the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes, and qualification holders’ in targeted, relevant arenas.

Leadership, and safe self-reliant participation, supporting education, health and wellbeing

Working with our strategic partners, members and Provider network we will seek to explore and develop links to develop:

- the use of the Mountain Training personal skills schemes to help support the development of self-reliance and confidence amongst the wider public to help ensure the safe and confident participation in outdoor activity.

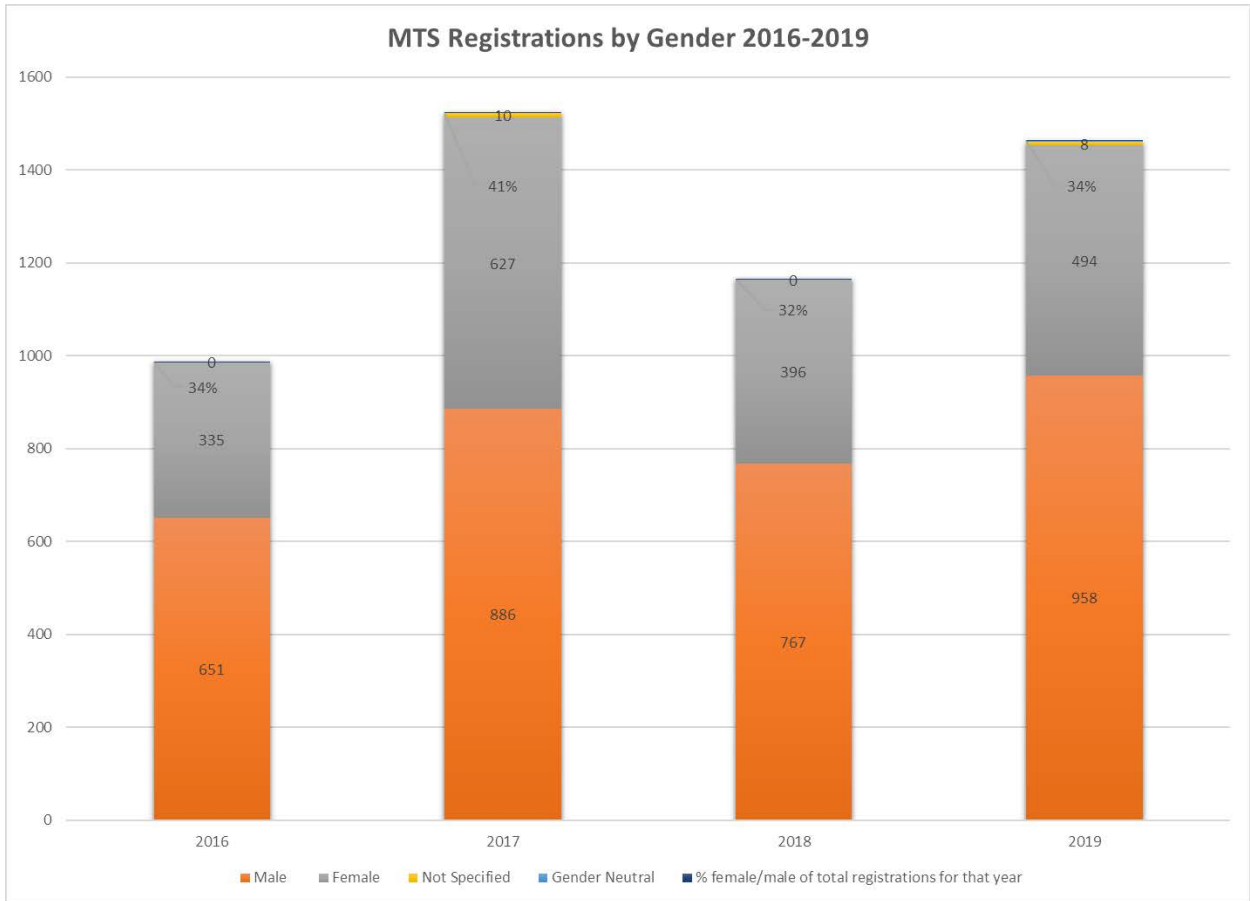
- The use of the Mountain Training leadership schemes, particularly the Lowland Leader to support led participation in low level and low key activity.

## Why?

Ensure workforce representative of society

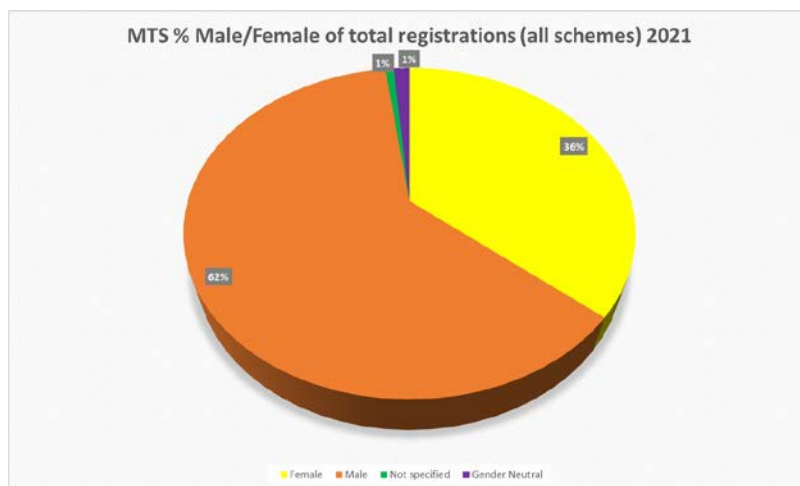
All candidates, when they register for a Mountain Training walking (Hill and Moorland Leader and Mountain leader) or climbing qualification, must be Members of a Mountaineering Council. This cohort of candidates represents a significant number of potentially new Memberships for Mountaineering Scotland. Having clear, strong mountain-related activity pathways that link participants with the Mountain Training qualification schemes is essential in providing a steady stream of 'new blood' wishing to become the next generation of leaders and instructors, and who, in turn, can then go on to share their knowledge and expertise with the next generation of walkers, climbers and mountaineers.

Mountain Training Scotland strongly supports the principles of equality within and throughout the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes. Mountain Training Scotland believes that everyone should have an equal chance to participate in and contribute to sport or their chosen recreation.



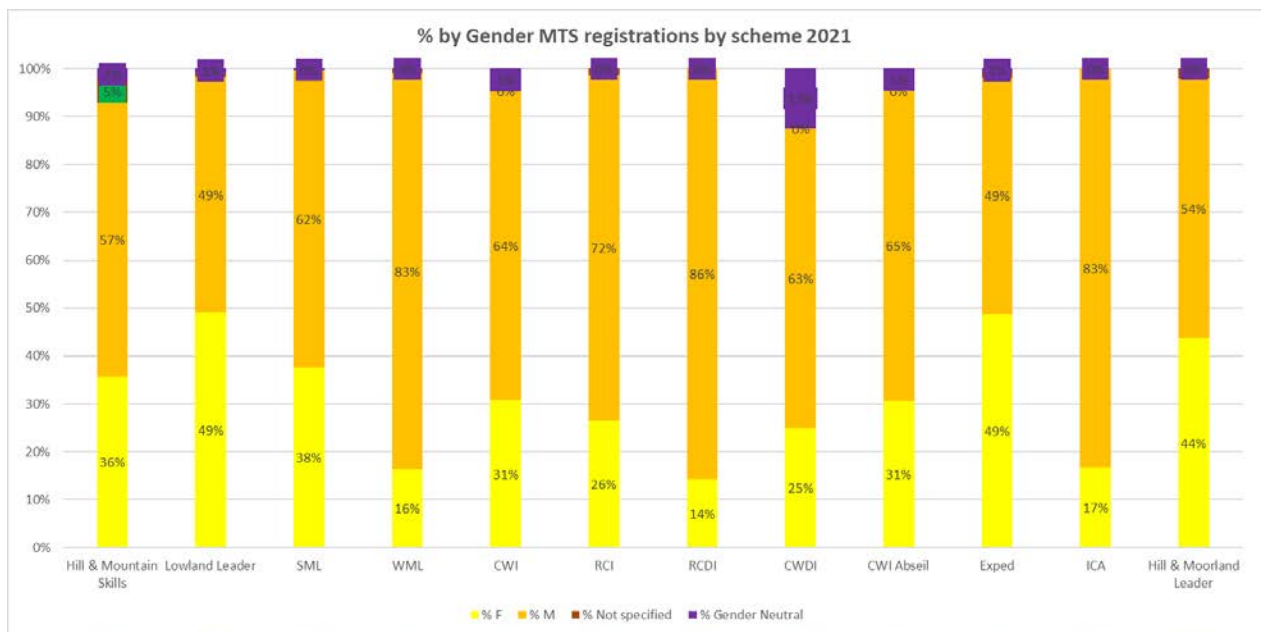
The above bar chart illustrates the proportion of female to male candidates (and those who have not specified a preference or are gender neutral). The figures for 2017 were significantly changed due to a large influx of new candidates into the newly launched Lowland Leader scheme, which then dropped off and stabilized the following two years.

The figures for 2020 and 2021 show a small 2% increase (from 34% to 36%) in the proportion of female to male candidates in registrations.





The breakdown across the schemes for 2021 looks like this:



The qualification courses that involve the shortest time (i.e. to under go training and assessment, and involve the most accessible 'terrain') are the most balanced. That is Lowland Leader, and the Hill and Moorland Leader. The Summer Mountain Leader has seen a significant positive increase in the balance from 25% F/M in 2015 to 38% F/M in 2021. This has steadily increased year on year.

### Ensure equality of access

Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes overseen by Mountain Training Scotland are open to all individuals who meet their entry criteria. To ensure this equality of access, our priority, in collaboration with our partners, is to identify and understand barriers, such as financial and time costs, to participation and work towards removing them.

During the pandemic MTS and its Providers turned to using on-line resources (from video conferencing to on-line learning) to support both the workforce and candidates retain a link to the scheme pathways.

The upsurge in interest in on-line learning has led to MTS and Mountain Training becoming increasingly invested in the development of on-line learning resources. In the longer term this opens up the possibility, with relevant and appropriate course content being covered on-line, with the possibility of revising course contact time which may lead to courses being less time intensive for candidates and therefore less expensive for Providers to deliver.

Development of on-line learning resources may mean an increased ease of access for candidates for whom time availability may be an issue.

### Develop self-reliance and responsibility in the outdoors

The recent pandemic has seen a significant increase in people accessing and participating in outdoor activity, including mountain-related activity, as part of their education, and for personal health and well-being. This activity has not just been confined to traditional mountain-related activities but has also seen people (due to lockdown restrictions) interact with their local area, its parks and public green spaces. It has highlighted with a resultant rise in incidents, often involving poorly prepared and inexperienced participants and anti-social and environmentally damaging behaviors the negative sides to this significantly increased participation.

## How?

Mountain Training Scotland has in recent years formalised its policies and procedures regarding issues of equality and inclusion on its courses. Practical steps to ensure candidates have equitable access included supporting Course Providers in making “reasonable adjustments”<sup>5</sup>.

In addition, many potential and actual candidates face challenges with gaining the personal experience for, and completing, their Mountain Training qualification(s) due to financial, family and time pressures. MTS created and implemented the MTS Bursary scheme for candidates whom the financial constraints may be a barrier to participation and whose participation may promote our commitment to diversity.

Membership organisations such as the Mountain Training Association provide some support via networks and further training opportunities to support current candidates. We will continue to develop and ensure continued contact between Mountain Training Scotland and candidates both pre- and post-qualification via supporting the Mountain Training Association in providing accessible and low-cost opportunities in Scotland for: scheme

---

<sup>5</sup> **Reasonable adjustments** are a key part of the Equality Act 2010. The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that as a disabled person, you have, as far as is reasonable, the same access to everything that is involved in getting and doing a job as a non-disabled person.

updates; continuing personal and professional development; qualification and personal skills refresher courses.

In Key Aim 2 Mountain Training Scotland will progress the equitable, inclusive and diverse, access to the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland by:

## **2.1 Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion**

2.1.1 Identify and seek to address the challenges facing candidates accessing and completing a Mountain Training qualification

2.1.2 Work with identified third sector partners to promote greater diversity of participation in walking, climbing and mountaineering related activities

2.1.3 Continue to develop the Mountain Training Scotland Course Director and associated staff 'workforce' so that it reflects the range of participants across the breadth of walking, climbing and mountaineering-related activities

2.1.4 Ensure and develop accessibility and access to all Mountain Training awards for candidates based on 'reasonable adjustments'

## **2.2 Connect with new and returning leaders**

2.2.1 Maintain and develop the overall number of candidates, in terms of registration and completion

2.2.2 Monitor, interpret, report on and act on diversity indicators

2.2.3 Use social media and digital online resources (in collaboration with Mountain Training UK and Ireland) to connect with potential leaders and instructors

2.2.4 Implement the MTS Bursary scheme for candidates whom the financial constraints may be a barrier to participation and whose participation may promote our commitment to diversity.

2.2.5 Support the Mountain Training Association in providing accessible and low-cost opportunities in Scotland for candidates both pre- and post-qualification.

2.2.6 Develop links between leadership and safe participation, and other relevant agendas including education, health and wellbeing by:

2.3.6.1 working with mental health and well-being organisations to help raise awareness amongst qualification holders and promote access to personal skills training via Mountain Training skills courses delivered by MTS Providers.

2.3.6.2 Collaborate with outdoor learning organisations to support the needs of teaching staff, educators, youth and community workers, and young adults via Mountain Training Scotland courses, training, resources, expertise and networks

2.3.6.3 Support Providers in the promotion of the Mountain Training qualifications and/or personal skills training schemes to support outdoor learning.

## 2.3 Profile

2.3.1 In collaboration with MTUKI, Mountaineering Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and sportscotland promote the interests of leaders, instructors and coaches amongst Scottish and UK Government and media

2.3.1 Identify, demonstrate and promote links between leadership and safe participation, and other relevant agendas including education, health and wellbeing by supporting and collaborating with the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Group (MSG).

2.3.2 Regularly review composition and profile of MTS Council of Members to ensure it is representative of, and supportive of those organisations involved in developing greater diversity of participation in walking, climbing and mountaineering related activities

## Key Aim 3

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

### What?

Financially secure and resilient

Mountain Training Scotland will maintain a secure financial base and seek collaborative and innovative ways of working with partners to ensure efficient and most appropriate use of resources. We will continue to improve and develop innovative and efficient ways of conducting our business.

Staff development and retention

Mountain Training Scotland will maintain the additional staff support for the MTS Executive Officer and will seek to ensure this staff network is secure and resilient to provide capacity and support to deliver proposed MTS strategic and operational outputs and associated outcomes.

### Why?

Three roles

Mountain Training Scotland is, in effect, three things: an awarding body; a franchiser of course provision; a sport development organisation. With our current resources and associated staff capacity we have to carefully prioritise and allocate our resources. In short, we cannot do everything.

Financial limitations

The primary sources of income for Mountain Training Scotland are fees from candidate registrations, and fees (both annual and course based) from approved Mountain Training Scotland Course Providers. These are agreed and set at a UK and Ireland level by the national Mountain Training organisations via Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland. Mountain Training Scotland has no scope to alter these fees independently.

Mountain Training Scotland receives significant investment from **sportscotland** on an annual

basis, with this investment set against agreed development projects and specific targets.

Mountain Training Scotland has to work smartly and efficiently to maximise value from these income sources. Whilst previously we believed registration fees were relatively secure, the recent pandemic indicated in extreme cases they were not. Hence in an uncertain financial climate it is essential that Mountain Training Scotland seeks additional avenues of income generation to maintain an operational surplus and to sustain continued development work.

#### Staff capacity and support

Once of the significant limitations to the ability of MTS to undertake projects is its capacity. This is dictated by the time available to the one full time member of staff, the MTS Executive Officer. The increased demands placed on the current contractor support (Administration and Finance Assistant and technical Officer) in recent years to both support and facilitate MTS projects has highlighted both the need for this support, and to ensure it is both resilient and consistent.

Mountain Training Scotland recognises that its staff are fundamental to its success. A strategic, professional approach to staff development and retention helps MTS to attract and retain high-calibre staff with the skills and competencies necessary to deliver its objectives.

## How?

Mountain Training Scotland is currently in a healthy financial position, allowing investment in a variety of development projects. In Key Aim 3 we will ensure the continued financial security and enhanced business resilience of Mountain Training Scotland by:

### 3.1. Financially secure and resilient

3.1.1 Continue to ensure core income is sufficient to fund Mountain Training Scotland core work programmes

3.1.2 Continue to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship with sportscotland to invest in key development initiatives and projects.

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

### 3.2 Staff development and retention

3.2.1 Continue to ensure a strategic, professional approach to staff development and retention to support and develop capacity and resilience to support MTS' strategic and operational objectives.



# MOUNTAIN TRAINING SCOTLAND IN 2026

## Outcomes

Our goal 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 this strategic plan will see us well on the way to achieving this goal. It would mean that by 2026 we would have:

## Key Aim 1

'To enhance the provision of mountain training, personal skills training and qualification schemes in Scotland'

### Co-ordination

- ensured all joint major policy/strategy discussions and projects include explicit consideration of fit with relevant organisations strategic aims and delivered via audit of partnership agreements and outcomes.

### Development

- fully implemented the recommendations from the Mountain Training walking Schemes Review
- a 10% increase in potential led days by qualified Mountain Training leaders and instructors from 78,631 (MTA Survey 2019) to 86,484 led days by 2026

- In collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland/ClimbScotland support the provision of safety courses to participants via the Mountain Training personal skills training schemes.

## Consistency

- moderated at least 30% of all Mountain Training Scotland Course Providers annually
- ensured that 30% of all approved Course Directors have completed at least one MTS Trainer, Assessors and Course Directors Reflective Practice Self-Assessment annually
- ensured that all completed Course Reports submitted by Providers and reviewed by Mountain Training Scotland technical staff are consistent with written Mountain Training Scotland guidance
- ensured that the number of formal customer complaints is less than 0.05% of total training/assessment places provided per annum
- ensured that the number of reported incidents is less than 0.07% of total training/assessment places provided per annum

## Community of Practice

- ensured that at least 30% of all Providers and associated staff have attended a minimum of one seminar/workshop per year
- approved 16 new Course Directors (min 4 per annum), across all schemes, to continue to meet required demand from Providers
- ensured that all Winter ML Provider and Course Director Seminars are attended by at least 70% of all MTS Winter ML Providers and Course Directors

## Pathways

- 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
- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland and MTUKI support access by mountain-related participants to shared accessible and relevant on-line digital resources
- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland (Ref Mountaineering Scotland Strategic Plan) promoted awareness of Mountain Training qualifications for use by volunteers and have facilitated 40 Mountaineering Scotland volunteer Members completing a Mountain Training qualification

### Sustainability

- ensured that environmental impact and related issues are referenced at all Provider and Course Director Seminars

## Key Aim 2

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

### Diversity, equity, equality and inclusion

- 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
- monitored accessibility and access by candidates with disabilities via reports from Providers/Course Directors as to what “reasonable adjustments” were made to accommodate a candidate’s specific needs

- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland (Ref Mountaineering Scotland Strategic Plan XXXX) support initiatives to engage with, and support, a diverse range of organisations which cater for under-represented groups to become involved in mountain-related activities

### Connect with new and returning leaders

- increased total MTS registrations by 10% from an average of 1420 to an average of 1562
- liaised with MTUK and National Mountain Training Boards on monitoring data via CMS on candidate diversity
- increased Mountain Training Scotland Facebook 'likes' by 20% by 2026 from 3.6k to 4.3k.

### Profile

- increased the reach and engagement via Mountain Training Scotland and Mountain Training social media pages (Facebook and twitter) by 20%
- in collaboration and partnership with Mountaineering Scotland (Ref Mountaineering Scotland Strategic Plan support initiatives to represent those involved in mountain-related activities and present a coherent voice on mountain-related activity matters

## Key Aim 3

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

### Financially secure and resilient

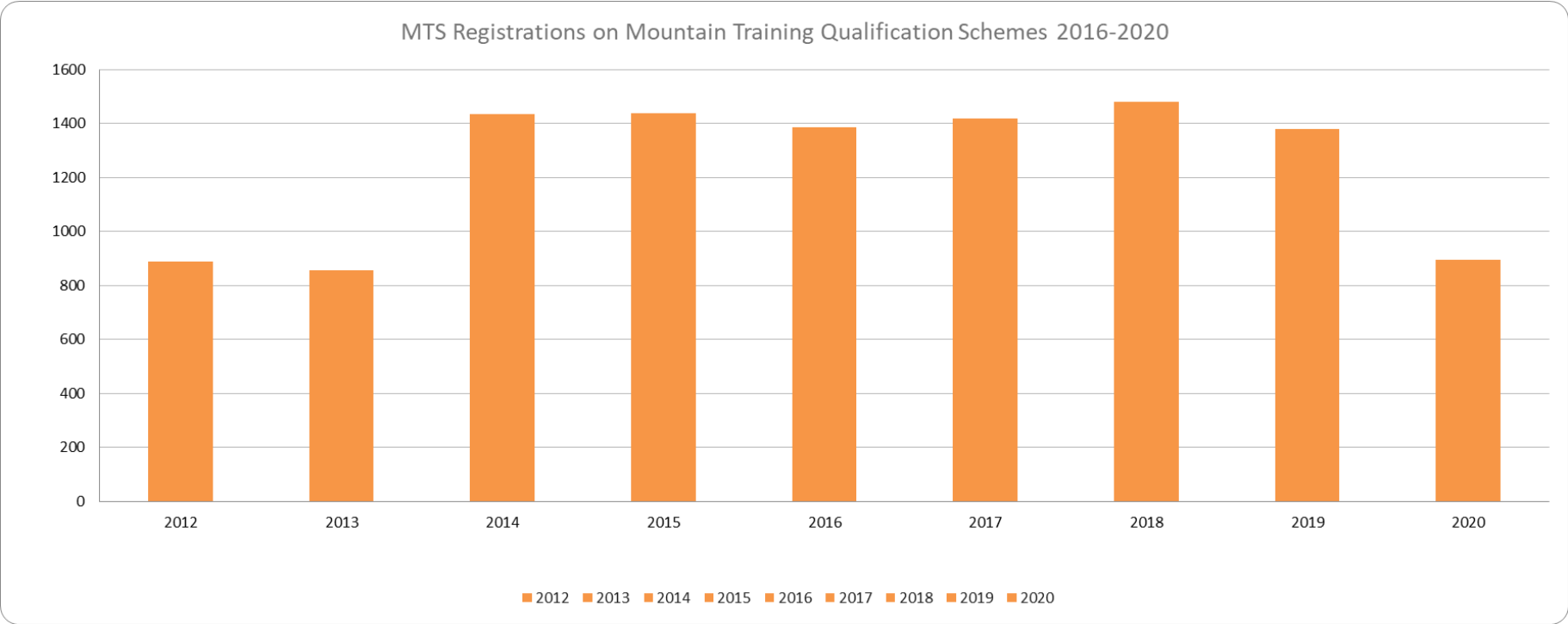
- ensured Mountain Training Scotland's income increased by at least minimum annual inflation rate (based on the Retail Price Index)
- ensured that the MTS Provider annual fee met cost of minimum moderation requirements (as defined in operational plan)

- 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.

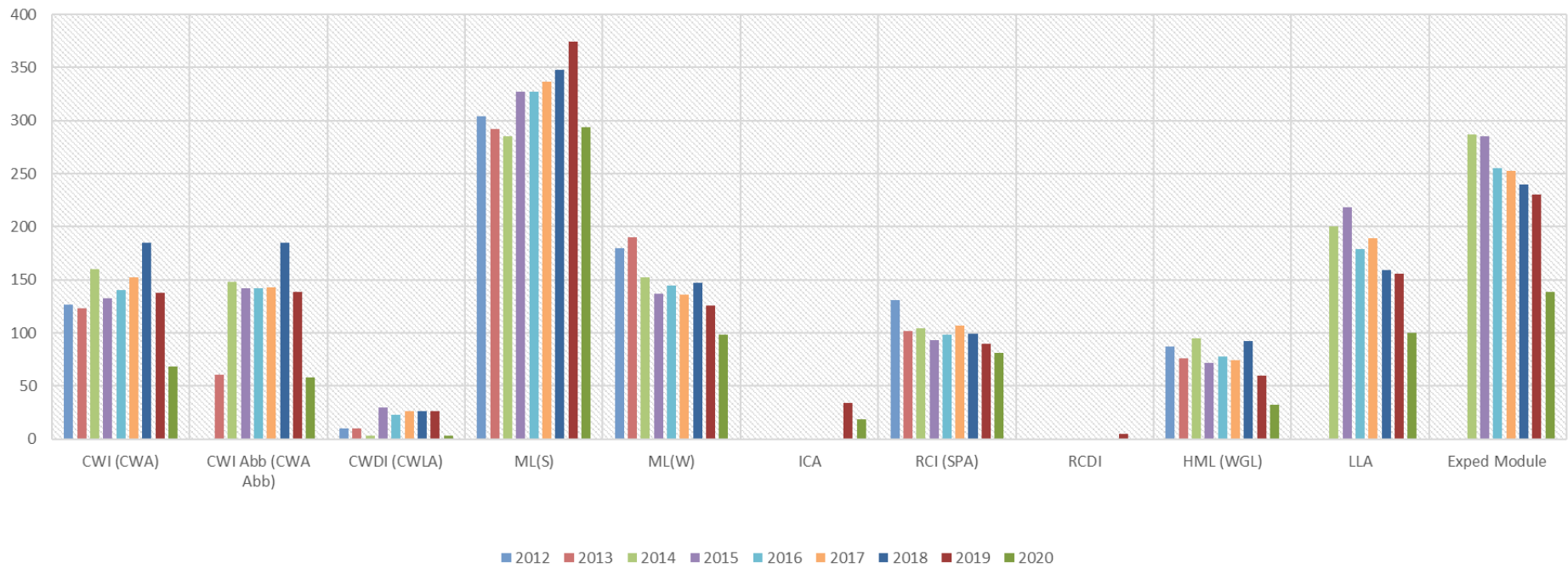
#### Staff development and retention

- ensured full time Executive Officer is supported by part time Finance and Admin Assistant and part time Technical Officer.

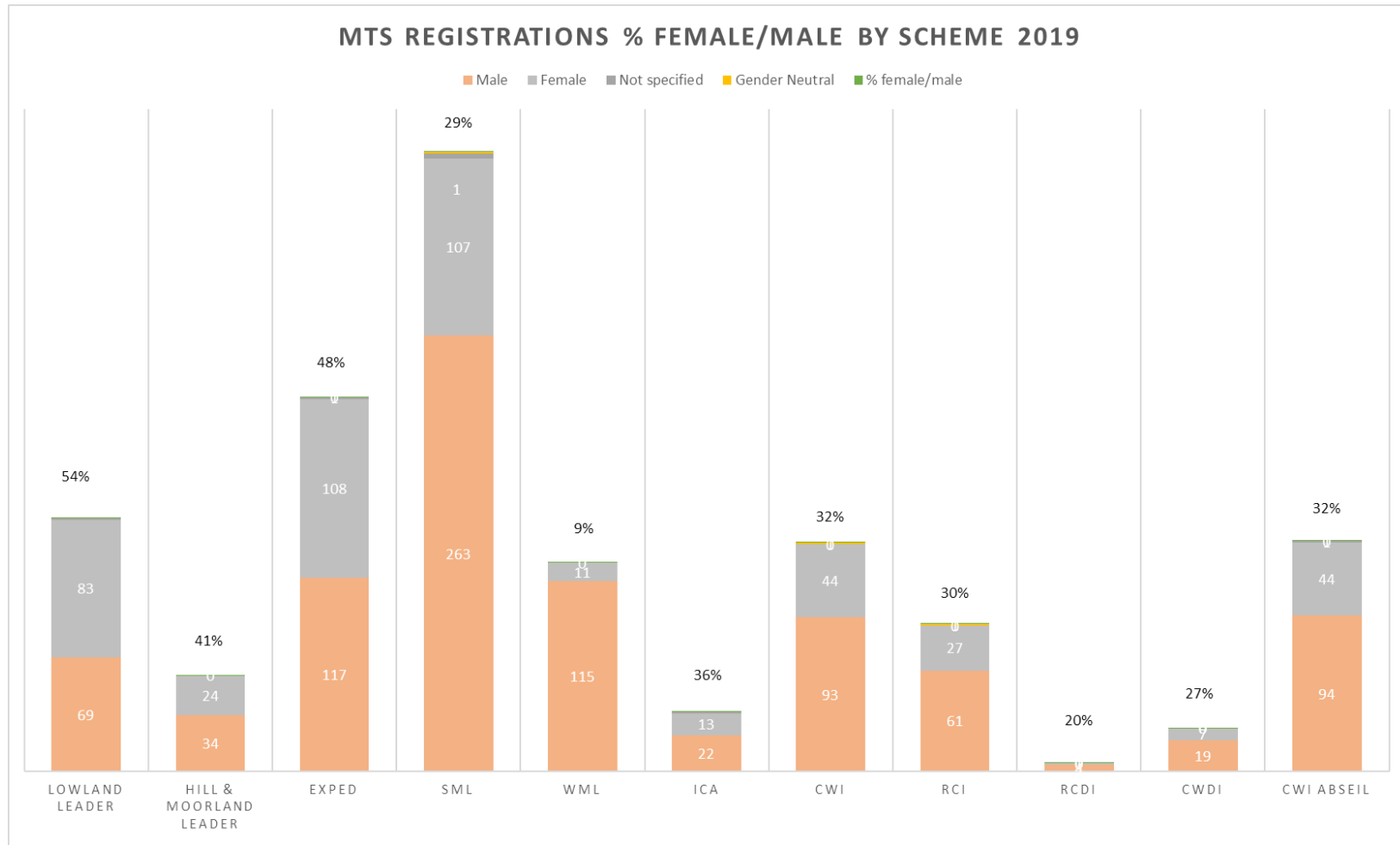
# Appendix 1 MTS Registrations on Mountain Training Qualification Schemes



MTS Registrations by Mountain Training Qualification Schemes 2016-2020

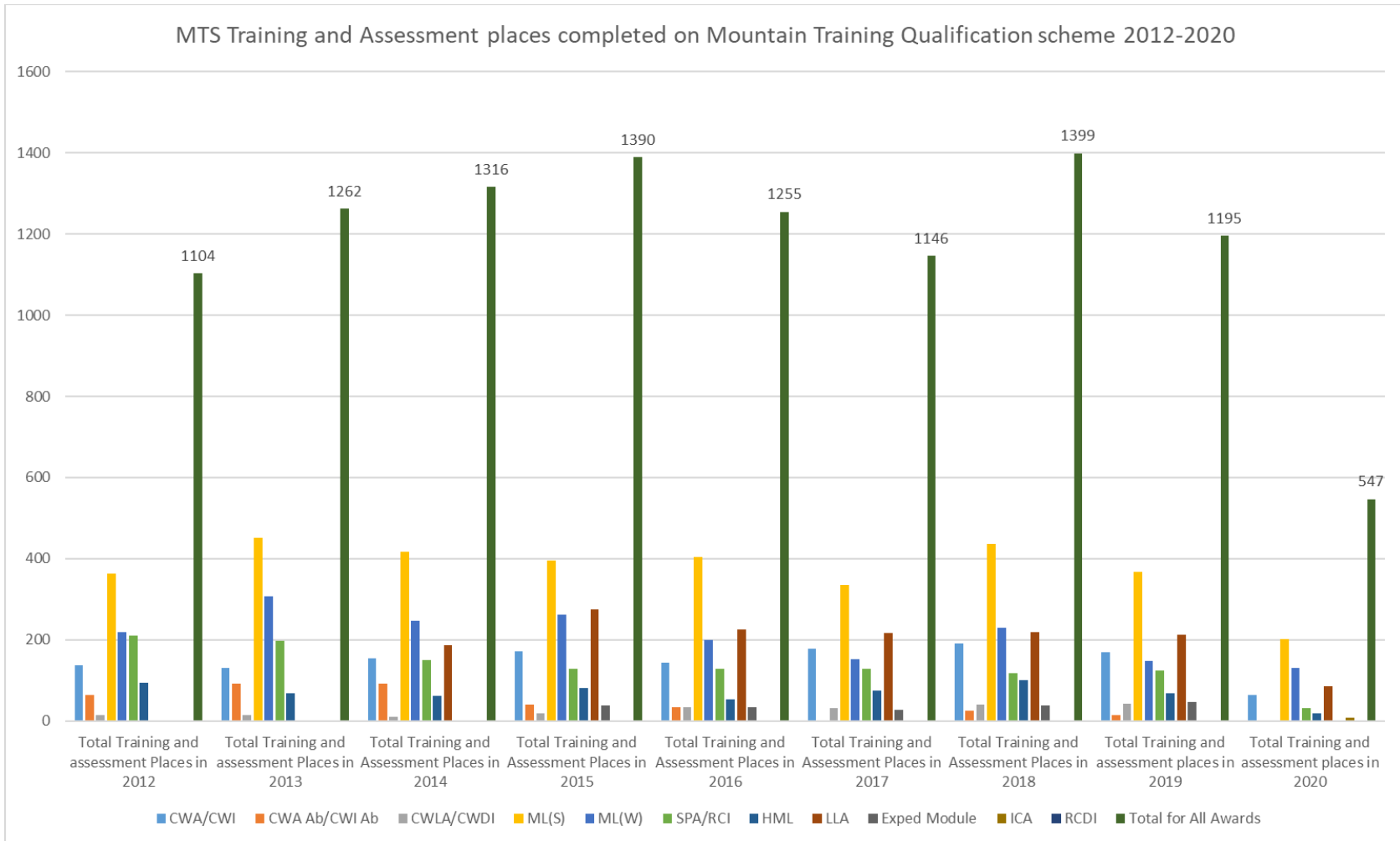


## Appendix 2 MTS Registrations % Female/male by scheme in 2019

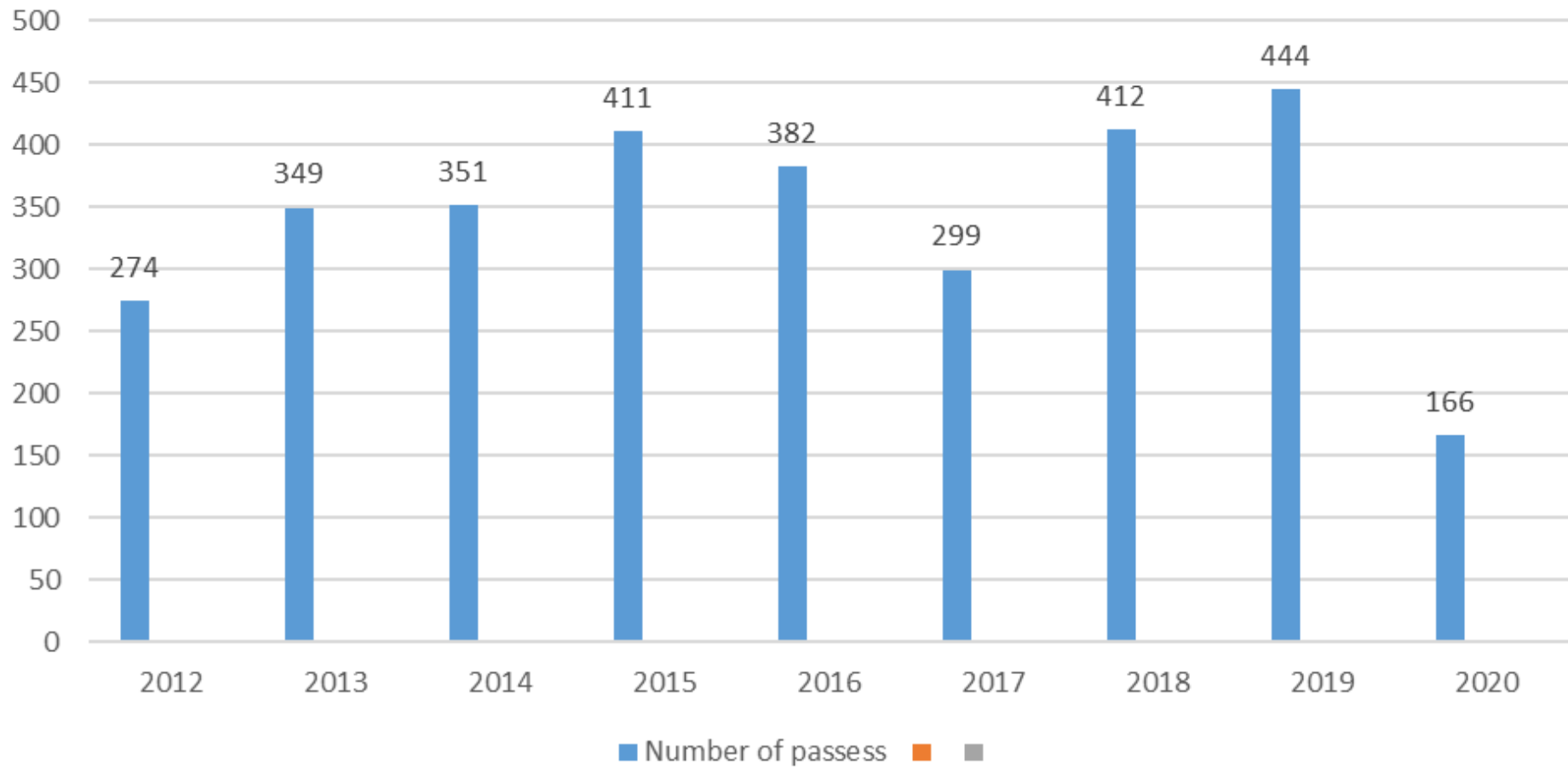




## Appendix 3 Training and Assessment Places



## Number of 'Passes' on Mountain Training Qualification Schemes MTS assessments 2012-2020



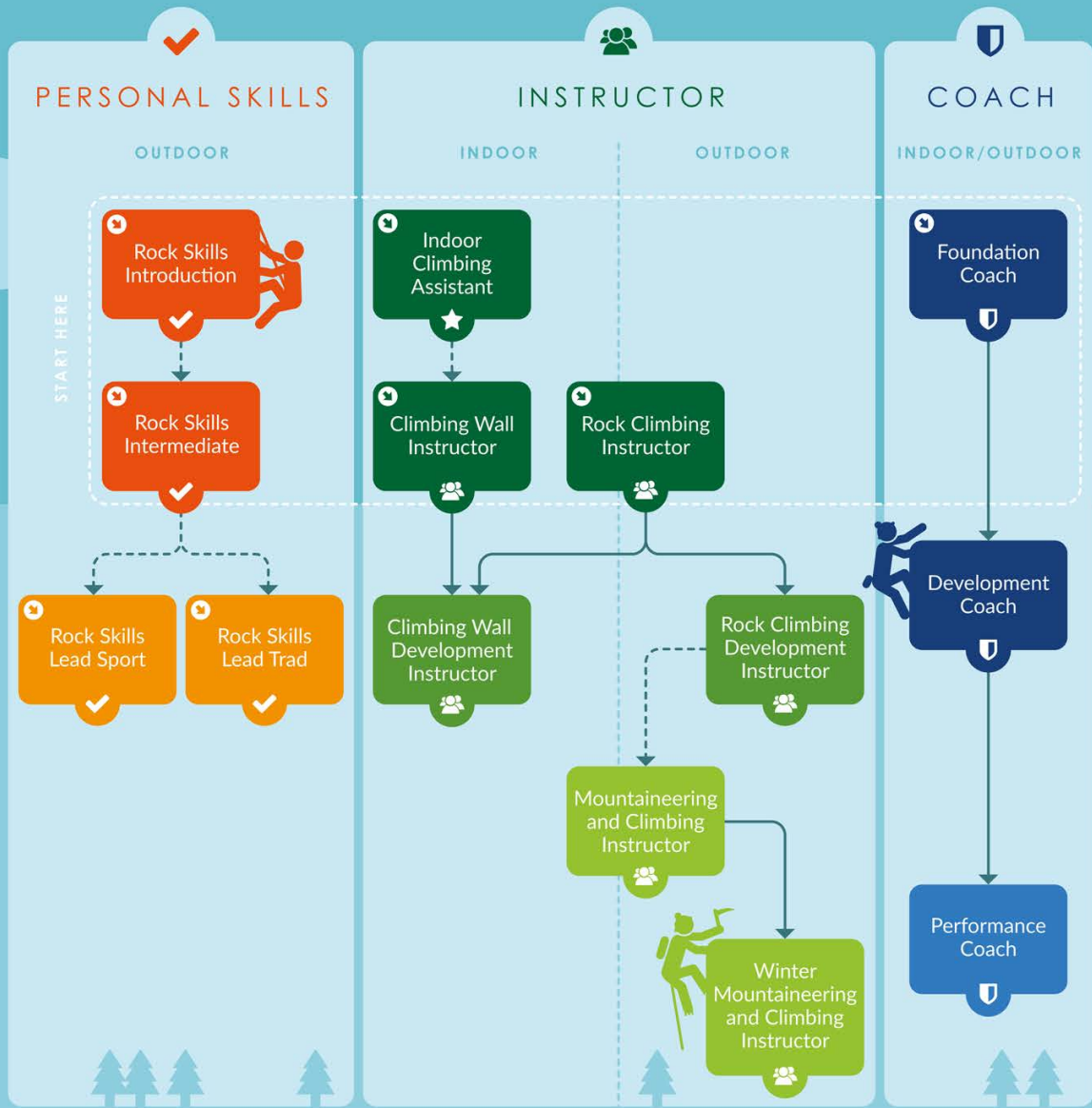
# Appendix 4 Mountain Training Personal Skills Training and Qualification schemes





# CLIMBING PATHWAY

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



## Appendix 5 Mountain Training Scotland in Scotland, the UK and Ireland

### Mountain Training Partners

Mountain Training Partners are organisations within the UK and Ireland Mountain Training network that Mountain Training Scotland works with closely.



### Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland

Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (MTUKI) co-ordinates the development and management of the Mountain Training qualification schemes by the national Mountain Training organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland. A key aim is to ensure parity in the Mountain Training qualifications syllabi across the UK and Ireland by agreeing a [range of nationally-recognised hill, mountain and climbing personal skills training, and leadership, instruction and coaching qualifications](#). Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland also co-ordinates activity on joint initiatives (known as global projects) to support and further develop the Mountain Training personal skills training and qualification schemes.

### national Mountain Training organisations

There are four<sup>6</sup> 'home nation' and Irish national Mountain Training Boards (each with their own Council of Members which collectively are referred to as national Mountain Training organisations), all of which are Members of Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (commonly referred to as MTUKI) who is the fifth. Each national Mountain Training organisation is solely responsible for overseeing and managing the provision of the Mountain Training skills training and qualification schemes in their country.

---

<sup>6</sup> Originally there were five but in 2017 Mountain Training Northern Ireland and Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS – Mountaineering Ireland) amalgamated to form a new Board called Mountain Training Board of Ireland.

## Scottish Key Partners

Strategic 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.



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 Mountain Training UK, to provide support and advice relating to matters of

mountain safety and training.



Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Training Centre,

operates within the **sportscotland** family of national centres. Glenmore Lodge defines its core function as supporting and developing leaders, coaches, guides, and instructors. Glenmore Lodge recognises governing body qualification pathways as a key enabler for quality participation in outdoor sport. 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.



## 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 eight 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.
- 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.**

## 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.

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 coordinates 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.

BAIML, BMG and MTA, across the UK and Ireland.

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 directly 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. This is achieved by overseeing and co-coordinating the in-put of all staff involved, while shaping the course to adapt to individual participants’ abilities and experience, taking into account the prevailing environmental conditions. Their key task is to introduce each of the syllabus skills in a progressive way, so that they are easy to understand, whilst maximising the opportunity for participants to practice the relevant and appropriate techniques and skills.

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. It is the responsibility of the Tutor/Course Director to ensure that all staff have appropriate levels of skill and experience.

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.