
Invitation to tender for research project

Mountain Training England (MTE) is seeking a contractor to fulfil a research project:
to determine the future leadership needs for climbing, hill walking and mountaineering in England, and possible responses to these by MTE.

About MTE

Our purpose

We enable people from all backgrounds to be active on the hills, crags and climbing walls of the UK. We support and develop thousands of professional and voluntary leaders who introduce and inspire millions of participants to follow their own adventures with competence, confidence and respect for these challenging environments. This personal agency and direct connection with nature enhances the physical and mental wellbeing of the nation.

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 recognised skills training and leadership courses.

In 1964 The Mountain Leader Training Board (MLTB) was set up by the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) and the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) to provide nationally recognised schemes of training and assessment for leaders of groups participating in mountaineering, hill walking and rock climbing. In 2003 the name of the organisation was changed to Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE) and in 2012 the name was again changed to Mountain Training England.

Mountain Training England (MTE) is owned and directed by its Council of Members who are drawn from a wide range of stakeholder organisations based in England. A Board of Trustees is charged with the strategic management of MTE by the Members. The Board comprises a group of volunteer Non-Executive Trustees and a BMC Nominated Trustee. A staff team lead by the Executive Officer manages the day-to-day business of the organisation.

Mountain Training England

Company number	03061504
Registered address	The BMC, 177-179 Burton Rd, West Didsbury, Manchester. M20 2BB
Telephone	01690 720272
Email	info@mountain-training.org
VAT	Mountain Training England is VAT registered

What we do

We currently train and accredit leaders and instructors through ten qualifications. These are:

- Camping Leader (CL)
- Lowland Leader (LL),
- Hill and Moorland Leader (HML),
- Mountain Leader (ML),
- Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI),
- Rock Climbing Development Instructor (RCDI),
- Indoor Climbing Assistant (ICA),
- Bouldering Wall Instructor (BWI)
- Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI)
- Climbing Wall Development Instructor (CWDI)

These qualifications are recognised by the Department for Education and the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority and are regulated by Ofqual. Currently the Board approves around 150 providers to deliver these qualifications. Since 1964 MTE has registered over 216,000 candidates on all its qualifications and skills courses.

Introduction to the project brief:

Participation levels, particularly in hill walking, have grown strongly in England since the Covid pandemic. Despite this MTE has not seen a commensurate rise in registrations for its qualifications and are now seeing a drop. Year to date our total registrations are down 11% against 2025. Certain qualifications have been in longer term decline for some years while others have fared better.

The research project seeks to explain:

1. What is happening in the sector in relation to the employment and deployment of qualified leaders.
2. How MTE can increase the number of qualified leaders to support the growth in participation.

Questions for the research to consider:

- How has the nature and demographics of participation in our activities, and its leadership, changed since the pandemic?
- What are the trends and reasons behind qualifications vs in-house training/local schemes?

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- What does MTE need to do to better engage existing and future leaders with our national qualifications?

Working hypotheses

Hypotheses for the research to examine and test around the overall downward trend of MTE's registrations are:

1. Cost of living pressures. Employers are finding it financially challenging to employ more staff and are reducing employment in our sector. Potential leaders have less time and money for training and volunteering.
2. Traditional routes into adventurous activities have declined, particularly within the education sector, which has weakened awareness of our qualifications. Social media driven activity has given rise to independent participation (and increased Mountain Rescue call outs) and community focused activity groups who have less experience of formal outdoor leadership and qualifications.
3. Led adventurous activities in the outdoors have declined and been replaced by more on-site facilities with less need for national qualifications.

Methodology

The research methodology could include:

- Desk based research – including MTE data, Council Member data, Sport England data and reports, previous reports and impact studies from MTE and sector organisations.
- Provider, organisation and candidate (MTA) surveys
- Online focus groups with community groups, employers/deployers and insurance companies.

Outputs required

- A qualitative and quantitative report on current activity and how this is being led.
- An analysis and description of trends in participation and its leadership – the growth areas and potential for MTE qualifications.
- A list of recommendations for MTE to implement in order to:
 - a) increase registrations in MTE qualifications and hence its revenue.
 - b) increase the total number of competent, qualified leaders in our activities
- The above needs to be in an accessible format for Board-level decision making.

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Support from MTE

- The contract manager will be Guy Jarvis, Executive Officer of MTE. Regular reviews can be scheduled as required by either party.
- We can supply anonymised data from our own candidate management system, along with a range of previous reports. We will be able to conduct some analysis of our own data as requested. We will require the successful contractor to sign a non-disclosure agreement with regard to the handling of this data, in order to comply with the General Data Processing Regulations.
- We can provide contacts with a wide range of sector organisations for research purposes.

Budget

Applicants may bid to a maximum of £8,000 including VAT and expenses to complete this project. It is envisaged that the project will involve up to a maximum of 20 days' work with the majority of meetings being online.

Application process

Applicants are invited to submit their proposals for the research project, in no more than four pages, and to include the following:

1. Their experience and credentials for undertaking the research project.
2. The resources that they have at their disposal to support them in this work.
3. Their proposed project plan and methodology.
4. Their work plan timeline for each phase of the project with estimated work days and daily rate, calculating the overall budget of the project.
5. The format/s of the output of the final report.

Timeline

1. The deadline for applications to be submitted to MTE is 9.00 am Monday 14th September. Please submit these to guy@mountain-training.org
2. Shortlisted applications will be offered online interviews on Monday 21st or Tuesday 22nd September with the successful applicant informed by the end of the week.
3. An interim progress report will be needed for the Board by 7th December 2026
4. The deadline for the final report to be completed and submitted by 25th January 2027.

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