



Mountain
Training
England

Annual Report 2025



Picture Credit: Emily Law

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Mountain Training England 2025 – The People

Member Organisations

Association for Physical Education
National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme
Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
Association of Mountaineering Instructors
British Association of International Mountain Leaders
British Association of Mountain Guides
British Mountaineering Council
Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Institute for Outdoor Learning
Girl Guiding
Joint Services Mountain Training Centre
Mountain Rescue England and Wales
Outdoor Education Advisors Panel
Plas y Brenin
Scout Association

Nicky Scott
Nicholas Parkin
Gareth Davies
Paul Smith
Scott Smith
Rob Spencer
Cressida Allwood/ Jon Garside
Lizzie Usher/ Matt Woodcock
Elsbeth Mason
Tarja Wilson/ Ruth Bint
Martin Chester
Ian Bunting
David Armstrong
Dave Evans
Ivor Lewis

Board of Directors

Chair
Treasurer
BMC representative
Independent Director
Independent Director
Director
Director

Peter Stacey
Kelvyn James/ Kim Parry
Sharon Kennedy
Jan Doyle
Joanna Corris Wright
Kelvyn James
Lee Pritchard

Staff

Executive Officer
Development Officer
Governance & Equity Officer
Finance Manager
Customer Service and Operations Manager
Partnerships Liaison Officer
Provider Support Administrator &
Skills Course Development Co-ordinator
Customer Service Team

Guy Jarvis
Mark Walker
Cath Luke
Kriszti Watts
Becky Jeffrey
Maddie Sweetman

Sam George
Laura Griffiths, Susan Gathercole
Sam George, Ashley Cartwright,
Rich Snaith



Chair's report – Peter Stacey

Going into the hills or on the crags always refreshes the parts other activities cannot reach, and this year has been no exception.

2025 saw the launch of the Bouldering Wall Instructor Award, and after a slow start, the indoor season through the autumn of 2025 saw an upswing in registrations and courses delivered.

The focus for the Board and Council has been in looking ahead to help create a new strategic plan for 2026 through to 2030. Where have we come from, what have we achieved and what are our aspirations and goals for the next five years?



Picture Credit: Emily Law

Have we identified goals and aims that we can deliver but will include a stretch element towards achieving those goals? Will we have the finance and other resources to take us through that period? And how might we identify success? All things for the Board, Council and staff to work towards.

At the end of 2025, we said farewell to Cath Luke, who had worked for MTE for over 28 years. An amazing record and much knowledge and experience has been shared with staff and directors throughout that time. Such is the magnitude of her involvement in Mountain Training, that we have spread her work between several staff and increased their hours to allow them the capacity to try and match Cath's output. Such was her workload within Mountain Training. Thank you Cath.

At the same time as saying goodbye to Cath, we said hello to our new Treasurer, Kim Parry, who has quickly taken up the reins and is working with Kriszti Watts, our Finance Manager, and the Finance and Audit Committee in exploring our options for budgets and expenditure to align the next five year plan to reality.

Our moderation programme led by Mark Walker continues to benchmark provider delivery of all our awards across England – thanks to Mark and his team. Some providers deliver courses well

away from our office in Wales, so moderators are based in regions to reduce the travel burden, as well as having that local knowledge of venues to benefit providers delivery. Our thanks to Sport England for supporting this work and to Cath and Kriszti for ensuring we remain compliant with Ofqual's requirements.

2025 saw us launch the first ever survey to explore issues of disability and our awards. The data has been analysed and will be released in 2026 when we can start to consider the implications and impact on course design and delivery, and at the same time how we might better enable such candidates to access the awards.

My thanks to all the team at Mountain Training; to Guy, Kriszti, Maddie, Mark and Sam, our amazing staff team. To my fellow directors my thanks for all the countless hours volunteering for your roles and to all the Council members who give so freely of their advice and support. We are a stronger team because of all you do. Thank you.

Peter Stacey

Chair, Mountain Training England.



Treasurer's report – Kim Parry

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) reports a total surplus of £20,358 for the year ended 31 December 2025 (2024: deficit of £2,343); this is made up from an unrestricted surplus of £19,358 and a restricted surplus of £1,000. The overall surplus was added to the reserves brought forward of £517,508, to give total reserves at the balance sheet date of £537,866.

We are pleased to report this overall surplus in our unrestricted activities in 2025, resulting from a small surplus in our charitable activities and supported by investment gains. Our total income rose from £449k in 2024 to £468k this year, with costs also rising from £455k to £468k and just under £20,000 in investment gains. Included within this performance is the designated EDI fund, with £5,215 of expenditure in the year and a closing reserve balance of £953. In terms of our minimal restricted fund activity, we received £1,000 during the year, this balance will be applied in 2026 to the Climbing for All publication project.

The Balance Sheet at 31 December confirms net assets of £537,866 (2024: £517,508), with net current assets of £379,184 (2024: £350,865) included within which are cash balances of £380,804. The Balance Sheet also shows the carrying value of our investments, at £156,272, and the relatively small amounts of working capital reported as stocks, debtors and creditors. The Board is in the process of reviewing the charity's investment policy, with a view to allocating a greater proportion of the organisation's net cash into medium term investments in due course.

Overall, the Financial Statements reflect a robust position at the balance sheet date, with strong cash balances and with unrestricted reserves that exceed the requirements of the Reserves Policy (see below). Having said this, the Board remain focussed on qualification registration levels and the organisation's cost base, to ensure that the charity continues to report a strong financial position moving forwards.

Going concern

The Trustees and Management Team have continued to review the financial performance and prospects for the charity, and we remain satisfied that the assumption of Going Concern remains entirely valid.

Reserves policy

The Reserves Policy, which is reviewed and approved by the Board on an annual basis, sets out an assessment of an appropriate level of free reserves, after designations.

The purpose of holding reserves is to ensure that Mountain Training England can continue to operate effectively during periods of uncertainty, able to respond to unforeseen financial pressures and to maintain the continuity of its charitable activities.



At 31 December 2025 the Trustees reviewed the Reserves Policy, with reference to the updated Risk Register and taking account of the wider financial context, concluding that the Charity should set a target for free reserves of £425,000.

At the balance sheet date the Charity held total Unrestricted Funds of £536,866, made up of a General Fund reserve of £435,913, £100,000 of designated Projects Funds (held in respect of a range of projects that will support the delivery of our 2026 to 2030 strategy), and £953 of designated EDI funds.

The trustees have agreed that free reserves may be held in a combination of cash, cash equivalents and fixed asset investments. On this basis the Charity held free reserves of £433,503 at 31 December 2025, exceeding our reserves target of £425,000. The trustees consider this level of reserve to be appropriate given the range of risks identified by the organisation and taking account of the wider economic environment.

The trustees will continue to monitor reserves throughout the financial year to ensure they remain at a level that supports the ongoing delivery of our work and that responds to the risks identified in our risk register.

Major risks

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charitable company is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Kim Parry
Honorary Treasurer MTE



Executive Officer’s report – Guy Jarvis

2025 was a stable year for MTE with regards to its performance. Registrations, our main source of income, were slightly up on the previous year with training attendance up 9%, but the number of qualifications awarded were slightly down. 34% of these were awarded to women, up 1% however.

	2024	2025	Change
Reg Total	5079	5221	3%
Trained	2831	3086	9%
Pass	2253	2192	-3%

This was the last year of our 2021-2025 strategy period. We fully delivered on 19 of our 23 strategy goals that we set in 2021 and we partially achieved the remaining four:

The Training pathway

The Bouldering Wall Instructor qualification launched in March after much work was completed to create the scheme handbook, guidance for providers and candidates, the recruitment and induction of providers and the launch of the scheme to the sector. In the first nine months of its operation 252 candidates registered for the scheme with MTE. We will want to review how this new qualification is bedding in after its first year in 2026.

MTE has also been involved in the review of MTUKI’s coaching qualifications and how they connect with our instructional qualifications. Coaching within climbing has evolved enormously over the last decade and this important work will continue into 2026.

We have further developed the mentoring service delivered through the Mountain Training Association (MTA) by using Sport England funding to digitise much of the application and pairing process. Subsequently the number of mentored candidates has more than doubled in early 2026 to 117 as a result of this work.

Our remote supervision course has been delivered as a regular online course for qualified leaders which is now supported by the D of E who signpost the course to all their leaders.

Our research into lowland walking skills courses concluded that there is a strong need for such a course but that our current delivery model is not accessible enough to realise this. We are therefore researching the most effective delivery model for all our skills courses in order to boost the take up of these across the board.

Quality provision

We developed our online training package for new course directors. There are now seven modules that all new course directors need to complete before gaining approval to deliver our courses. These cover



administration, course delivery, inclusion, safety, qualification pathways, practical assessment and syllabus themes. This provides a consistent reference point for their training and quality assurance.

We updated guidance on the delivery of the Rock Climbing Instructor, Mountain Leader and Rock Climbing Development Instructor qualifications. MTE works very closely with the four other Mountain Training organisations and, as issues arise, we consult to provide joint updates to our providers and candidates to maintain consistency. One of these updates was a change to the qualification



Picture Credit: Emily Law

requirements to deliver our Rock Skills intermediate course in response to a safety incident that occurred on a non-Mountain Training course.

Our Leadership Responsibilities e-module was developed and rolled out in 2025. This is a significant resource for the entire sector as it details fundamental knowledge about duty of care and good practice that every adventure activity leader should be aware of. We have been receiving a lot of

interest from partner organisations and we will explore how this can become more widely promoted as a resource to support standards across the sector.

Our moderation programme, constant monitoring of course reports and regular dialogue with our experienced providers all continues to reassure us that our reputation for quality is being maintained.

Sustainable delivery

We have seen a 3% rise in total registrations from the previous year. However, if we factor out the new BWI registrations there was a 2% drop in like for like registrations from 2024. Nevertheless, MTE is financially stable having generated a surplus of £20,356 in 2025, bringing our balance sheet up to a healthy £537,077. There are signs that some of our qualification registrations are softening over time however, and we will continue to monitor these carefully.

Our Sport England grant reduced from £45,000 to £27,500 for the financial year 2026-2027 but we have been able to carry over £8,672 of unspent funds to mitigate some of the effects of this. This money has supported development work in the areas of equity and inclusion, partnership work, digital mentoring, provider training, skills course development and our disability survey.

The Organisational Review of the Mountain Training network was conducted throughout 2025. Our governance and operational structure as a network is fairly complex, and all the more so when our relationships with the Mountaineering Councils and professional associations are included. Much discussion was held between the twelve organisations that are represented on the MTUKI Council, but the financial pressure on some members, with MTC in particular, has focussed minds. The governance

structure of MTC is likely to change, and this will affect the whole network. It looks like 2026 may well determine the future structure and relationships of our network for many years.

We have also been considering our impact on the environment both as a business and in how we influence our providers and candidates' behaviour. We have established a sustainability working group which is developing policies for staff, providers and candidates. We have enlisted the support of an expert external advisor who is developing educational resources for our candidates, to be launched next year.

Supporting diversity

Much project work has been carried out this year, supporting diverse groups to engage with MTE, culminating in the development of a new EDI strategy to be implemented over 2026 to 2030.



Picture Credit: Emily Law

Projects that took place in 2025 include:

- Running a series of online webinars through the Mountain Training Association as a follow up to our Women in Mountain Training conference. These well attended events included topics such as managing menopause in the outdoors, developing leadership styles and gender issues in the outdoors.
- We worked with the Muslim Charities Forum to advise them on the development of their ten-point charter on leadership in the outdoors.
- We ran online outreach sessions on de-mystifying Mountain Training for people with little knowledge of what we do.
- We worked with the RNIB to develop a 'walking guide' training course to support sight impaired participants with hillwalking.
- We wrote guidance on working in the outdoors during pregnancy which was added to the BMC's Outdoor Her website.
- We commissioned Access Sport to survey participants and instructors on their experiences of participating on our schemes with disabilities.
- We continued to work with the National Trust on their Walk Together project, supported Climb Out with their LGBT climbing festival, and the Wanders of Colour summer festival with training.
- We initiated our On Route project with three community groups to train and qualify new instructors from ethnic backgrounds, with two candidates already having qualified as Climbing Wall Instructors.

We continued to award direct grants to individuals through our Skills and Training Fund and our Disability Fund.

Promoting our mission

MTE is represented on both management groups of AdventureSmart UK and the England and Wales Mountain Safety Forum. The Forum's role is to research mountain safety issues and to provide advice and guidance to the sector. AdventureSmart UK promotes a simple but crucial message around planning for safe outdoor participation, using targeted behaviour change methodologies. Both of these bodies are seeking to reduce the ever-increasing number of Mountain Rescue call outs to members of the public.

In support of this we have developed a range of free micro-learning e-modules that cover essential skills such as planning a walk, setting a map, taking a bearing, and tying in with a bowline or a figure of



Picture Credit: Emily Law

eight. Our social media feeds continuously give advice and news on topical issues relating to mountain safety, our courses, training events, resources, environmental news and regional and national events. Our partnership with Cotswold Outdoors has promoted our skills courses with one solus email being sent to 386,000 of their customers.

Finally, we have travelled the country to be present at events such as the Outdoor Expo at the NEC in Birmingham, the Ten Tors Event in Devon, the ABC conference in Sheffield, the Kendal Film Festival, The Institute of Outdoor Learning conference, the Aim 2 Change conference in London, Outdoor Education Advisors meeting in Buxton, and the National Trust in London as well as the climbing festivals mentioned earlier.

Effective partnerships increase our agency and reach enormously, and our work with our strategic partners, Council members and community groups has been invaluable. We also continue to be grateful to Sport England for the financial and strategic support they give to many of our projects.

Work ahead

2026 will be a reset for MTE. Our new five-year strategy will be completed with its operational plans beginning to be implemented. We shall be bidding to Sport England for funding to support this strategy. We need to review the Bouldering Wall Instructor qualification's performance and delivery after one year of its launch. We will also review the delivery model of our skills courses, researching other models that could increase access and the take up of these courses. However, the biggest piece of work may lie in reviewing how the entire Mountain Training network could be more efficiently

organised, in order to sustain our uniform quality service to all our candidates over the coming decades.

I want to thank the whole Siabod Cottage team for their hard work and professionalism over the year and in particular to thank Cath Luke who retired in December after thirty years with MTE. Her knowledge, wisdom and dedication to the organisation will be missed.

Guy Jarvis

Executive Officer



The Year in Numbers

2025 was a stable year overall, with registrations roughly level on 2024 once the introduction of the new Bouldering Wall Instructor is taken into account. It was pleasing to see a significant increase in young registrants which was due to this new qualification scheme and the Indoor Climbing Assistant growing. Training attendance has been strong although there was a slight drop in the number assessments being undertaken.

Qualification Totals	2024	2025	% change
Reg U18	267	322	21%
Reg Female	1857	1822	-2%
Reg Total	5079	5221	3%
Trained	2831	3086	9%
Pass	2253	2192	-3%
Defer	170	185	9%
Defer 1st Aid	121	99	-18%
Fail	17	11	-35%
Exempt	29	20	-31%

The Lowland Leader continues to grow slightly while the Mountain Leader continues to decline slowly. I predict that the Lowland Leader will eventually become our most popular qualification in the coming years. The biggest drop was with the Camping Leader which may be related to the increase in its registration fee in 2024. This is being reviewed at present. There are some signs that the indoor climbing qualifications may be softening as walls come under pressure with the minimum wage and NI increases.

Qualification Registrations	2024	2025	% reg change
Bouldering Wall Instructor	N/A	252	N/A
Lowland Leader	1036	1063	3%
Camping Leader	402	337	-16%
Hill and Moorland Leader	457	516	13%
Indoor Climbing Assistant	270	316	17%
Mountain Leader	1253	1197	-4%
Climbing Wall Instructor	926	854	-8%
Rock Climbing Instructor	502	480	-4%
Rock Climbing Development Instructor	30	40	33%
Climbing Wall Development Instructor	203	166	-18%

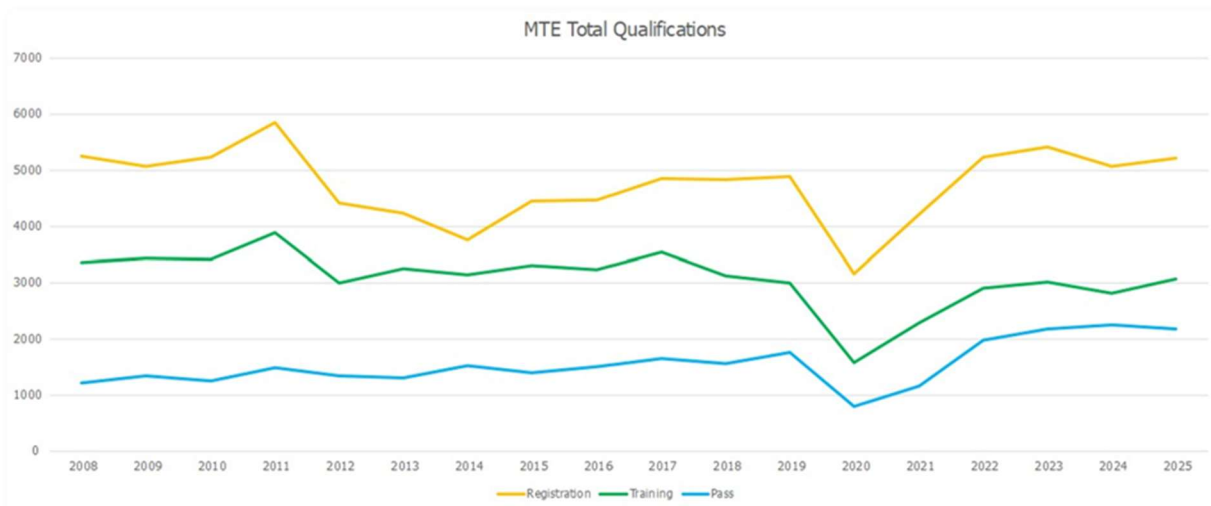


Skills Course Registrations	2024	2025	% reg change
Hill & Mountain Skills	745	638	-14%
Rock Skills	372	336	-10%

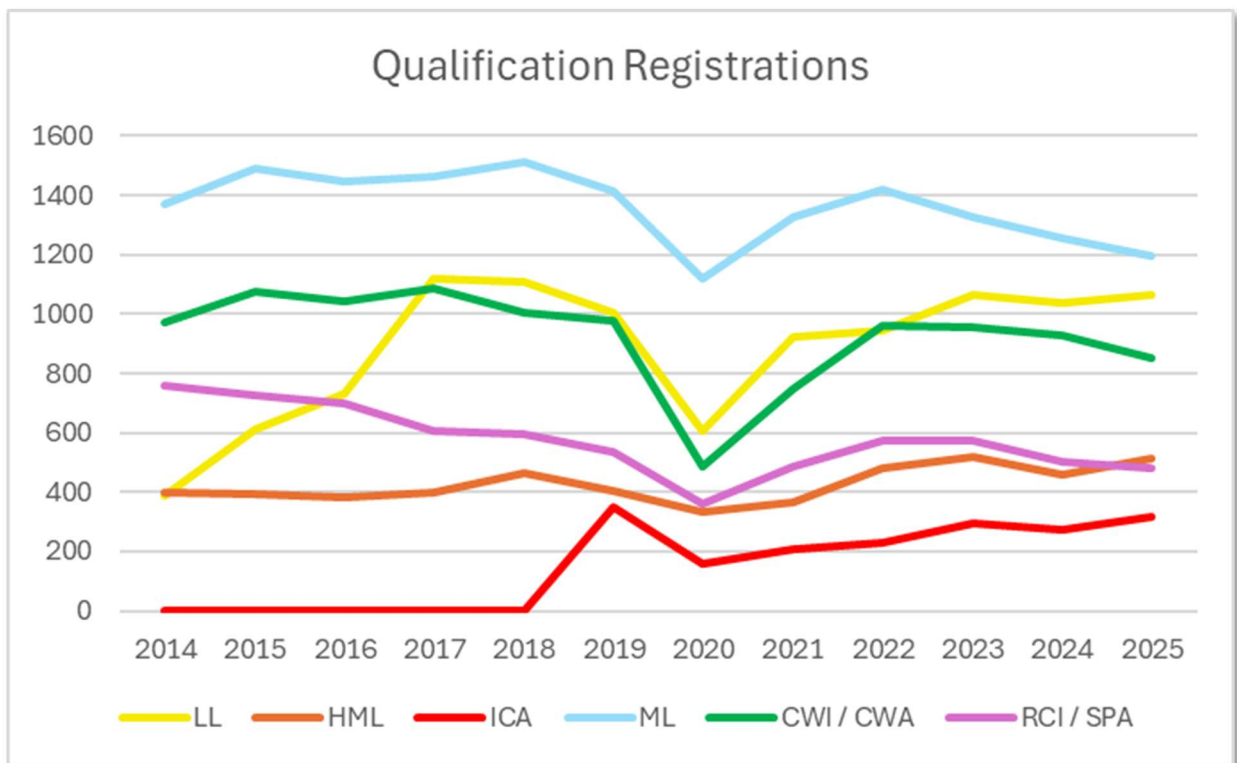
Our skills courses struggled this year and we have commissioned a review of their delivery model to determine if we can develop a more accessible model for both providers and participants.

Long term trends

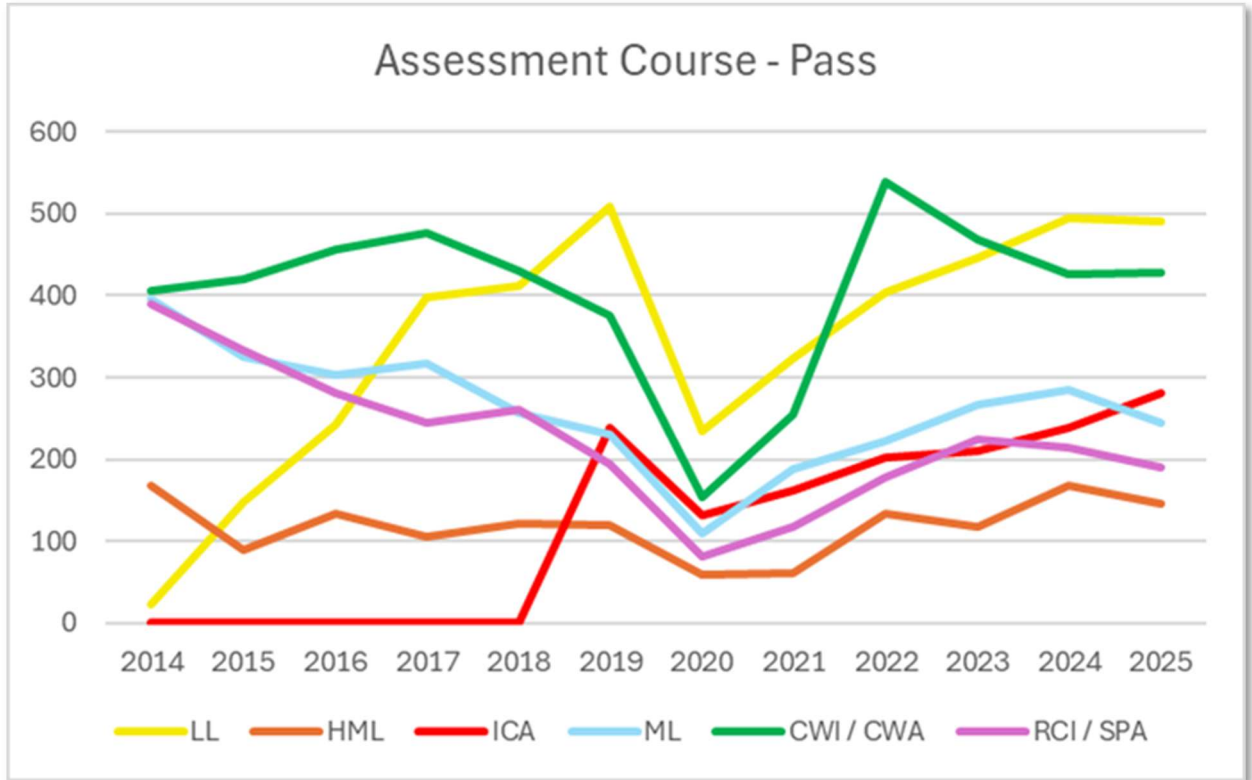
The ‘big picture’ graph shows that registrations are broadly at the same level as they were seventeen years ago. However, this masks a lot of variation between our schemes over these years. The most significant change over this period is that the gap between training and assessment numbers has narrowed. This means that twice as many candidates go on to take an assessment and gain a qualification than in 2008. This is due to our offers being more diverse and meeting more candidate’s needs than in the past. It also reflects the training and quality of our providers who are able to manage and inspire a wider demographic of candidates than in the past. The challenge for MTE is to raise total registrations and therefore expand our audience.



Allowing for the 'Covid years', we can see the decline in registrations for the Mountain Leader and the growth of the Lowland Leader. The Hill and Moorland Leader has become stronger, possibly as candidates have come to recognise its role over time. The biggest decline over time has been with the Rock Climbing Instructor, probably reflecting the major changes in outdoor education and the modern climbing wall-based pathways into climbing.

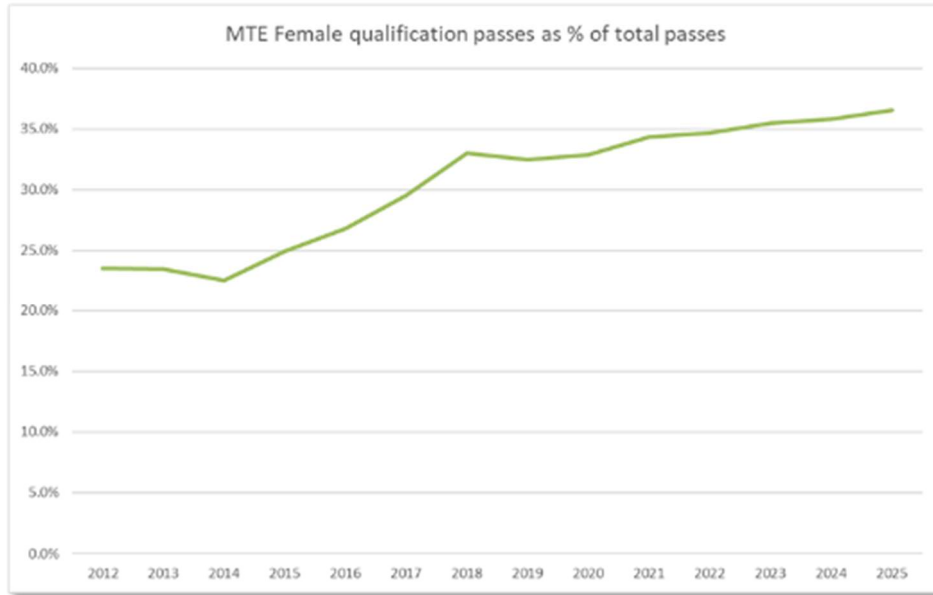


With regard to assessments, and candidates gaining qualifications, the Lowland Leader has now overtaken the Climbing Wall Instructor, after the CWI's post-pandemic rebound when climbing walls re-opened. There are now half the number of Rock Climbing Instructors becoming qualified compared to 2014.

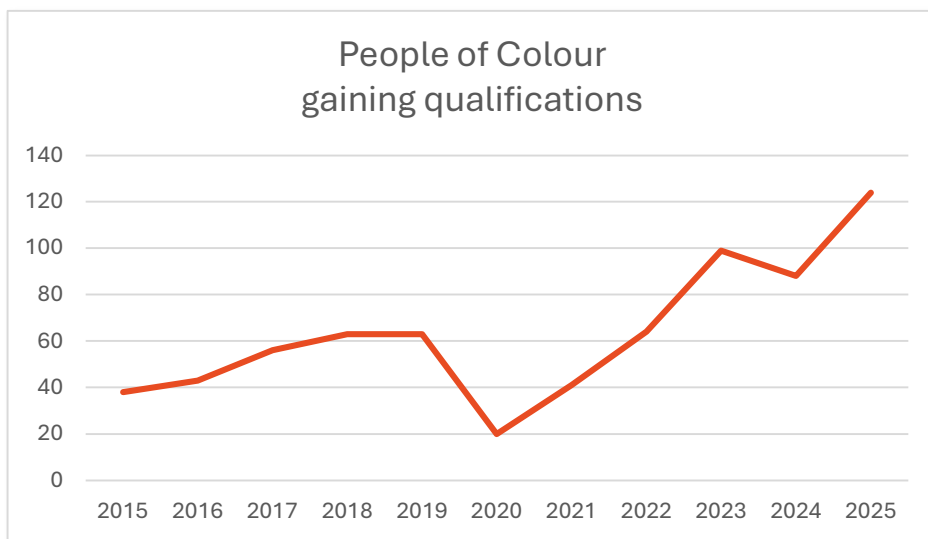


Diversity

We have worked hard over the years to encourage more diverse candidates to become qualified leaders. There has been steady progress with female candidates and we aim to reach 40% of our qualified leaders being female by 2030. Central to this will be the continued recruitment of course directors so that female leadership can be seen by our candidates.



The number of qualified leaders who are people of colour is much smaller. We have started from a very low base but progress is being made by working with national and community group partners. Currently 5.7% of our qualifications are awarded to people of colour, but given that 16% of the English population are people of colour there is a lot of work ahead for us.



Guy Jarvis

