

SUMMARY

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Mountain Training Scotland, part of the Mountain Training network, made significant strides in enhancing training provision, broadening inclusivity, and reinforcing operational resilience in 2024–25, despite challenging weather and a modest financial deficit. Key developments included the launch of new schemes, deeper community engagement, and strengthened governance and sustainability planning. Progress in diversity, training accessibility, and candidate outcomes highlights a continued commitment to a robust, inclusive future for mountain training in Scotland.

Registrations and course places

- 2024 registrations: 982 (↓10.2% from 2023).
- Course places - 1264 candidates completed a training/assessment course in down by 11.4%.
- Skills scheme completions increased by 67.5%

Gender and Ethnic Balance

- Gender breakdown: 35% female, 8% unspecified – aligned with Mountaineering Scotland membership trends.
- Ethnic minority representation held steady at 2%

Winter Mountain Leader 2025

- 15 courses ran(10 training, 5 assessment). Down 37.5%
- 82 candidates trained;
- 30 candidates assessed
- (88% pass rate).
- Historic first: no snowhole overnights.
- 26% of candidates registered in 2024 female. Up 17% since 2015.

Financial Position

- Income: £103,841
- Expenditure: £117,901
- net deficit of £5,489 (improved from forecasted deficit of £11.3k).
- 78% of income derived from registrations and provider fees
- 22% from sportscotland funding to support development projects

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Strategic Aim 1: Enhance Provision of Mountain Training Schemes in Scotland

Coordination

- Maintained collaboration via MTUKI Council and monthly technical meetings.
- Actively contributed to the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Group, supporting:
 - Development of new microspike safety guidance.
 - Creation of the Investigating Adverse Events template (now adopted network-wide).

Development

- Climbing Schemes updated to incorporate leadership and decision-making competencies (launched January 2025).
- Bouldering Wall Instructor Scheme launched (March 2025) with 5 providers and 10 Course Directors.
- Supported ClimbScotland staff to become approved Course Directors.
- Developed the new One Day Outdoor Skills course:
 - Qualitative research conducted to assess demand and preferences of prospective client groups.
 - Recommendations now under review by national Mountain Training organisations for Phase 2.

Winter Mountain Leader (WML) Season

- 15 courses delivered (10 training, 5 assessment), with multiple cancellations due to poor conditions.
- Historic first: no snowhole overnights achieved due to inadequate snowpack.
- 82 candidates completed training; 30 completed assessments (88% pass rate).
- Notable improvement in gender balance in the Winter scheme to 26% of candidates registered being female. In 2015 only 9% of candidates were female and very slowly rose to 13% in 2022.

Consistency

- 9 moderation/support visits conducted, focusing on probationary Course Directors.
- Reinforced incident reporting and learning through the 'Community of Practice'.

Community of Practice

- 3 new Course Directors and 3 new Providers approved; 4 resignations recorded.
- Discipline-specific workshops delivered for climbing and walking (20 attendees).
- Additional CPD and training events engaged 104 participants.

Pathways

- Continued partnership with Mountaineering Scotland to expand course director/tutor infrastructure.
- Enabled qualification access for youth-focused groups (e.g. Scouts, independent schools).

Sustainability

- Phase 1 (Materiality Assessment) of MTS Sustainability Plan completed.
- Continued input into national policy via MTUKI Sustainability Working Group.

Resilience

- All e-learning content migrated to the new MT-hosted Articulate platform.
- Development of additional resources, for use by our provider and staff network as part of our 'Community of Practice' strategy, candidates and partner organisations is on-going.

Strategic Aim 2: Equitable, Inclusive & Diverse Access

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- 14 bursary applications received; 11 approved, totalling £3,141 awarded.
- Since 2019: £19,900 awarded/pledged; £11,086 disbursed across 47 applicants.
- Staff gender diversity remains low (14% female tutors/directors in 2024–25).
- Our Movement Matters initiative continues, including early-stage partnerships (e.g. Ramblers Scotland).

Reasonable Adjustments

- 14 candidate reports received (majority: neurodiverse needs) in 2024.
- Adjustments successfully supported participation in schemes such as CWI and ML.
- Case studies shared to support inclusive practice.

Engagement with Leaders

- Planned engagement at Mountaineering Scotland Student Seminar and MTA CPD events was not fulfilled due to limited staff availability.

Candidate Trends, Registration and Course Places

- 2024 registrations: 982 (↓10.2% from 2023).
- Gender breakdown: 35% female, 8% unspecified – aligned with Mountaineering Scotland membership trends.
- Ethnic minority representation held steady at 2% since 2023.
- Skills scheme completions increased by 67.5% (211 in 2024 vs. 126 in 2023).
- Training/assessment places - Overall 1264 candidates completed a training/assessment course in 2024 compared to 1427 in 2023; (↓11.4% from 2023).
- Compared with pre-COVID 2019 figures (total 1195 candidates completed a training/assessment course), this represents a 5.6% increase overall.

Strategic Aim 3: Financial Security & Business Resilience

Financial Position

- 2024–25 income: £103,841; expenditure: £117,901; resulting in a net deficit of £5,489 (improved from revised forecasted deficit of £11.3k).
- 78% of income derived from registrations and provider fees; 22% from sportscotland funding.
- Course fee increases implemented (April 2024) to uphold quality and address rising costs.

Operational Resilience

- Continued reliance on one full-time Executive Officer, supported by a part-time Technical Officer and Admin Assistant.
- Recognised need for long-term staffing sustainability and capacity building.

Governance

- KPMG audit rated governance as “satisfactory” with four minor recommendations—all now actioned.
- Updates implemented across operational planning and risk management systems.

Staffing & Development

- Operational delivery maintained through self-employed staff and external specialists.
- Ongoing CPD provided through MTS-led and collaborative training opportunities.

Appendix 1 MTS Strategic Partners

Mountain Training Partners

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



Figure 1 national Mountain Training organisations

Scottish Key Partners

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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




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

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

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




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

Appendix 2 Mountain Training Scotland Board

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

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

Appendix 3 MTS Executive Officer and staff

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

Appendix 4 Mountain Training Scotland Council of Members

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

There are currently ten Members of Mountain Training Scotland:

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

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

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

Appendix 5 Mountain Training Personal Skills & Qualification Pathways

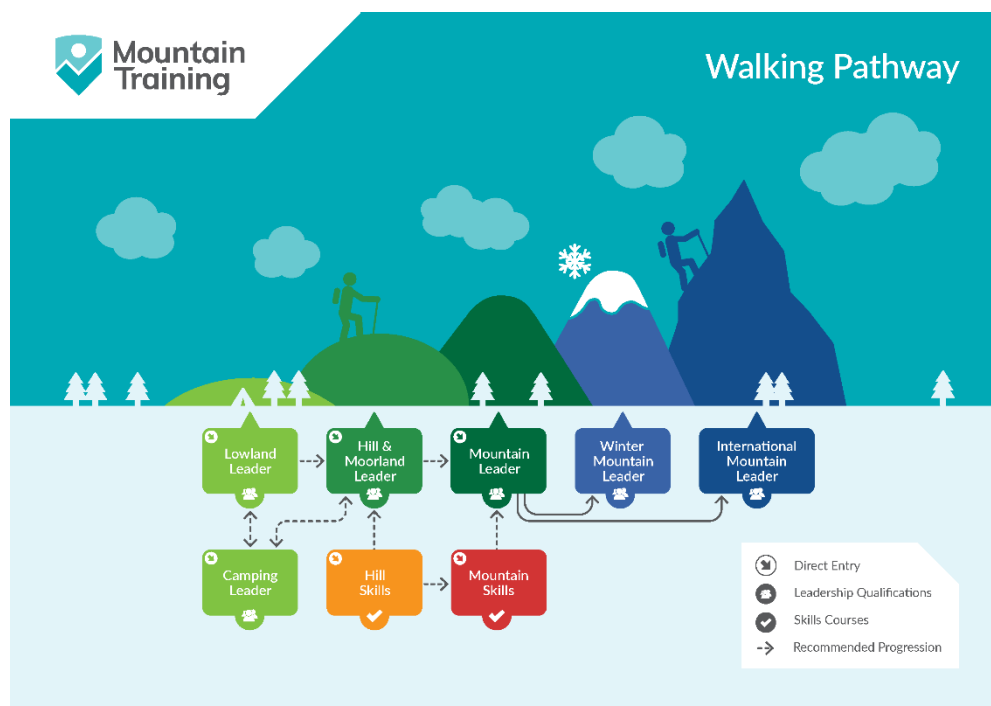


Figure 2 Mountain Training Walking Schemes Pathway

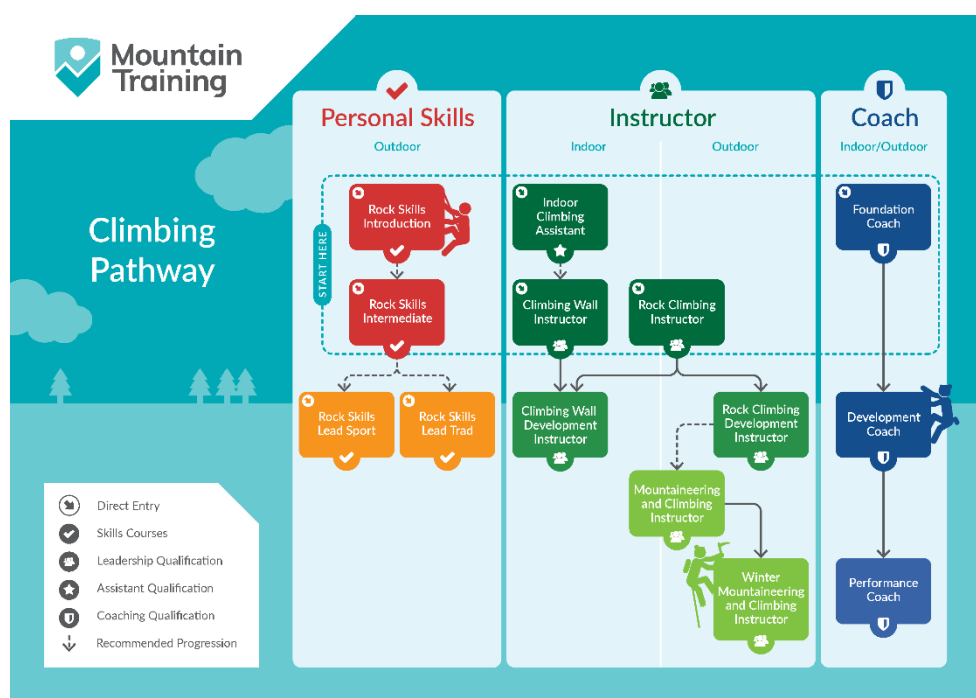


Figure 3 Mountain Training Climbing Schemes Pathway

Appendix 6 Glossary

Mountain Training Scotland (MTS)- A Scottish based charitable body whose purpose is the advancement, for public benefit, of education and training in the skills required for the leadership and instruction of safe

mountain related activities, and to offer advice on matters of training and safety. One of five national Mountain Training organisations.

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

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



Figure 4 Mountain Training Network (MTUKI Council Members)

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

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