



# **Strategic Plan for Climbing, Hill Walking & Mountaineering 2013 - 2017**

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Amendment to 5.5: Governance  
Amendment to Appendix ii  
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## **About the BMC**

**Who we are:** The BMC is the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales.

**What we do:** The BMC's mission is to promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. Through a democratic structure the BMC shall:

- Negotiate access improvements and promote cliff and mountain conservation.
- Promote and advise on good practice, facilities, training and equipment.
- Support events and specialist programmes including youth and excellence.
- Provide services and information for members.

**What we want:** The BMC's vision is to be the organisation that every climber and hill walker wants to join.

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## **Notes on terminology**

The BMC's work covers a broad range of mountain sports activities (both indoor and outdoor) and it is impractical to repeatedly list these when referring to issues within this document. The phrase, 'climbing and hill walking' is therefore used throughout the text. This should be read as referring all of the activities listed in Section 3.0, i.e. hill & mountain walking, rock climbing & scrambling, bouldering, indoor climbing, winter climbing, mountaineering & ice climbing, Alpine & Greater Range mountaineering and ski mountaineering.

It should also be noted that National Governing Body (NGB) is a Sports Council term used to describe the BMC and other national sporting organisations; the BMC's Memorandum & Articles of Association define the BMC as a 'representative' body rather than a 'governing' body.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the BMC's key strategic work for the four-year period of 2013-17. The BMC was established in 1944 as the National Representative Body for climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and ski mountaineers in England and Wales. It is also formally recognised by Sport England as the National Governing Body for mountaineering activities in England.
- 1.2 The BMC has 49500 individual members and 24500 club members in nine defined regions (known as BMC Areas) across England and Wales; the organisation has 307 affiliated clubs and 27 staff (all figures from January 2012). The BMC's formal remit, structure and operating procedures are set out in the BMC Memorandum & Articles of Association available at [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk). The BMC is a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 1.3 The overall management of the BMC is carried out by a combination of the National Council, the Board of Directors (the Executive Committee), the Finance Committee and senior staff. National Council is comprised of representatives from the BMC Areas and it is the main policy making body of the organisation. The Executive Committee is responsible for operational issues and takes advice from the Finance Committee on financial matters. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the BMC office.
- 1.4 The BMC relies on a well-established structure of voluntary Specialist Committees, supported by staff, to develop and oversee much of the organisations technical work for members. The BMC Areas provide a focus for local activities and are instrumental in driving national policy. Organisational and staff structure charts are shown in Appendices i & ii.
- 1.5 To achieve the aims described in this document the BMC will work in close co-operation with key partners including Mountain Training England (MTE), Mountain Training Cymru (MTC), the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS), Mountaineering Ireland (MI), Mountain Training UK (MTUK), the National Mountain Centre (Plas y Brenin), the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC), the Outdoor Industries Association (OIA) and others.
- 1.6 The delivery of the mountain leader training awards in the UK is the responsibility of the MTUK and the home nation Mountain Training boards. The BMC and MTE jointly employ a Training Officer and the BMC is a Director of both MTE and the Mountain Training Trust (MTT). MTT is responsible for the operation of Plas y Brenin.
- 1.7 In drawing up this strategy the BMC has embraced the concept and aims of sustainability in our work and activities. This includes working to reduce the impact of climbing and hill walking on the cliff and mountain environment, ensuring that our members recognise the need to act sustainably (e.g. in their modes of transportation and their choice of equipment). The BMC is also implementing an environmental policy covering the day-to-day operation of the organisation.
- 1.8 This strategy is based on a review of the BMC Strategic Plan 2009-12; input from Specialist Committees, National Council and BMC staff; a Membership Survey and a Climbing Wall Questionnaire undertaken in 2010; the findings of the BMC Future Policy Review 2005; an assessment of Sport England's strategy for 2013-17 and input from key partner organisations.

## **2.0 Funding the BMC's work**

- 2.1 The BMC's work covers an unusually diverse range of activities making it relatively complex for its size. The BMC is an unusual mix of being a representative body, a membership organisation, an environmental and campaigning organisation, a commercial and trading entity, a sport development organisation and a National Governing Body.
- 2.2 The organisation relies on membership subscriptions, travel insurance sales and Sport England grant support for the bulk of its annual income. Income from other trading activities (i.e. the BMC online shop) is also becoming increasingly important. A breakdown of the relevant contributions of these income streams (based on 2010 figures) is as follows:

Membership Subscriptions:	66.3%
Travel insurance:	18.3%
Sport England grants*:	7.9%
Trading activities:	7.1%
External sponsorship:	0.4%

\* BMC only; does not include grant support sourced by the BMC for mountain training activities covered by MLTE & MLTUK.

- 2.3 The bulk of the BMC's core operating costs and all costs associated with our access, conservation, environment and land management work are paid for by membership subscriptions and travel insurance income. Sport England provides additional funding (based on a 4 year grant cycle) for specific aspects of the BMC's work including climbing walls, competitions, membership services, clubs and mountain training.

### 3.0 Scope of activities

3.1 Compared to the representative or governing bodies of many other sports, the BMC's work covers a very diverse range of sporting activities. Whilst it was originally established as the national organisation for 'mountaineers', the modern day BMC has an interest in the full spectrum of climbing and mountain based activities as follows:

- **Hill & mountain walking:** Includes all forms of summer and winter upland walking and trekking worldwide.
- **Rock climbing & scrambling:** Includes all forms of roped or solo climbing on natural rock faces, sea cliffs, ridges and quarried cliffs both at home and overseas.
- **Bouldering:** Unroped climbing on short, often steep and technical crags and isolated blocks of rock.
- **Climbing walls:** Roped climbing and bouldering on climbing walls, usually in an indoor setting. Includes competition climbing on artificial structures.
- **Winter climbing & mountaineering:** Climbing on snow and ice covered rock faces, ridges and gullies and other serious mountaineering undertakings in Scotland, Snowdonia and the Lake District.
- **Ice climbing:** Climbing icefalls and waterfall ice throughout Europe and worldwide.
- **Alpine mountaineering:** Climbing snow, ice and rock faces, ridges and summits in an alpine mountain environment, typically the European Alps.
- **Mountaineering in the Greater Ranges:** Mountaineering and exploration in the Himalaya, Central Asia, South America, Greenland, Alaska and elsewhere.
- **Ski mountaineering:** Combining mountaineering and skiing disciplines, usually in an Alpine setting, within Europe, the Caucasus or further afield.

3.2 Whilst many people participate in several or many of the above activities (often depending on the season or weather conditions), increasing numbers of people focus on individual activities such as bouldering, sport climbing and indoor climbing. In a recent membership survey (2010) a high proportion of BMC members listed hill walking as their primary activity.

3.3 The popularity of indoor climbing has increased significantly over the last 20 years and today many people (often based in the major cities) climb only on indoor climbing walls. There are more than 350 indoor facilities with public access across England and Wales. Indoor climbing is popular across the age groups but particularly amongst younger people and students.

## 4.0 Overall strategic aims

4.1 The BMC's overall strategic aims for 2013-17 are as follows:

- **Access & Conservation:** To work with landowners, conservation bodies and statutory agencies to improve access to the cliffs and mountains in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- **Membership:** To grow our membership by at least 2.5% per year with an increased focus on younger people.
- **Regional support:** To significantly increase our presence 'on the ground' by appointing up to four Regional staff to support new climbers, clubs, Area volunteers and indoor facilities.
- **Infrastructure:** To support newcomers to climbing and hill walking by encouraging an infrastructure of high quality clubs, walls and training opportunities, and a clear pathway to help people to develop their interests in the sport.
- **Profile:** To promote the interests of climbers and hill walkers amongst Government and the national media, and be an advocate for competition climbing as an Olympic sport.
- **Social media & online resources:** To connect with younger climbers and hill walkers by extending our use of social media and to create an extensive online film and video resource for the BMC website.

It should be noted that aspects of this strategy are dependent on securing Sport England funding for the appointment of up to four Regional Officers from 2012-14 and for a specialist to develop the BMC's work for hill walkers. Regional Officers would focus on the 14-25 year olds and would support the transition from indoor to outdoor climbing, promote club membership and help develop underutilised indoor climbing facilities. Note: Sport England funding for a London Regional Officer (1 year initial contract) was confirmed in April 2012.

## **5.0 Work programmes**

### **5.1 National representation & media profile**

One of the BMC's most important functions is to represent the interests of members and act as the 'voice' of climbers and hill walkers at a local, national and international level.

In doing this the BMC will:

- Work with central Government, relevant government departments and agencies and conservation bodies to promote the better understanding of climbing and hill walking and spell out the social, economic and health benefits of our activities.
- Promote the history and traditional values of British climbing and mountaineering amongst new and existing participants, relevant external organisations and the media.
- Promote the interests of climbers and hill walkers in the outdoor press and national media.
- Actively campaign against developments, legislation, opinion and perceptions that could have an adverse impact on the freedoms of climbers and hill walkers to enjoy their activities.

### **5.2 Access, conservation & environment**

This core area of work will build upon the BMC's strong track record of negotiating access improvements and promoting a responsible approach to climbing and hill walking across England and Wales. This work will be carried out through a partnership of Regional Access Representatives, office staff and technical experts on the BMC's Access, Conservation & Environment Group (ACEG) and the Land Management Group (LMG).

In doing this the BMC will:

- Campaign within the increasingly separate legislative frameworks of England and Wales for the appropriate delivery and management of access under the CROW Act, the Marine & Coastal Access Act and other relevant legislation. Work with Defra, Natural England, the Welsh Government and Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to ensure the needs of recreational access are reflected in legislation and its implementation.
- Campaign against policies, legislation and developments that could negatively impact the upland landscape, or threaten our rights to visit and enjoy the cliff and mountain environment.
- Set up a new structure of specialist working groups to develop BMC knowledge and policy on the following: opportunities for disused quarries; developments in the uplands (landscape impact); nature conservation and climbing; climate change; landowner liability, and group use. Review the need for further groups based on feedback from members.

- Maintain and develop the Regional Access Database on the BMC website as the definitive source of climbing access information.
- Develop and promote the BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT) as a vehicle for funding environmental and landscape projects that promote sustainable access to cliffs, mountains and open countryside across the UK.
- Promote the landscape and amenity value of our crags and mountains and work constructively with landowners to manage cliff habitats in a way that benefits both climbers and wildlife. Promote respect amongst climbers for agreed climbing restrictions to protect conservation interests, especially with regard to nesting birds.
- Raise awareness among participants (especially novices and newcomers) of the special qualities and conservation value of the cliff and mountain environment. Produce publications and online resources to inform people about sensitive habitats, species of conservation concern and broader environmental considerations.

### **5.3 Land & property management**

The BMC owns its Head Office (177-179 Burton Road) and together with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, has a 50% share in the ownership of the Glenbrittle Hut and the Alex MacIntyre Memorial Hut. We also hold a 50 year lease (expiry 2041/2) on the Whillans Hut in Staffordshire. In addition to this, the BMC owns and manages several crags and the surrounding land for the benefit of climbers i.e. Aldery Cliff, Horseshoe Quarry, Harrison's Rocks, Stone Farm Rocks, Wilton 1, Craig y Longridge and Craig Bwlch y Moch.

In managing these assets the BMC will:

- Provide access to BMC huts for BMC club and individual members.
- Make BMC owned crags freely accessible to all climbers and hill walkers.
- Manage BMC land holdings in an environmentally responsible manner and share examples of good management practice amongst other land owners including quarry companies.
- Designate BMC owned crags as Open Country under Section 16 of the CROW Act when this is possible.

The BMC is also involved with several other sites on a lease or management agreement basis. The BMC has an overall policy of not seeking to take on the ownership or management of climbing sites other than as a last resort.

### **5.4 Membership services & support**

To meet the needs of existing members and to attract new members the BMC will implement an ongoing programme of improvements to our administrative processes and the range and quality of services we offer.

The BMC will:

- Provide a reliable and efficient telephone and email response service covering all aspects of membership, insurance and technical queries related to the BMC's work programmes.
- Review our membership benefits and associated administrative processes for different age categories in order to make BMC membership more attractive to younger people.
- Work to improve our membership retention rates, reactivate lapsed members, further promote direct debit membership and save on administrative costs. Promote Council membership as a pre-requisite for people registering for the various awards of the mountain training boards.
- Work with the Mountain Training Boards to develop services and support to those going through the award schemes. Improve the retention of MLT award registrants in England and Wales (note: all such registrants are required to have BMC membership in order to register for an award).
- Implement a promotional strategy within climbing walls and online media to encourage younger people to join the BMC. Improve and develop the membership database including an online members' login area and member centric local area information. Utilise mobile technology to provide user friendly access to membership records and services.
- Develop a new Travel Insurance sales module for the BMC website.
- Develop our use of Facebook, Twitter and other social media as a mechanism for communicating with members. Significantly increase the volume of film clips and video on the BMC website.
- Expand the range of services offered to members – particularly retail incentives and discounts. Continually monitor and improve the quality and format of our communications with members.
- Embrace new technology in the production of BMC publications. Continue to produce climbing guidebooks for the Peak District and elsewhere as a high quality resource for climbers. Further improve Summit magazine and promote it as a valuable membership benefit to climbers and hill walkers.

## **5.5 Organisational development & improvement**

The BMC Executive Committee and the CEO will oversee a process of ongoing development and improvement within the organisation. As well as the items referred to in 5.4 above the BMC will:

- Work with the Sport & Recreation Alliance to fulfil the voluntary code of good governance; and Sport England to further improve and strengthen the governance of the BMC.
- Undertake an ongoing review of our internal management regulations and our administrative policies and procedures related to finance, legal compliance (travel insurance), personnel and other relevant matters.

- Develop a new marketing & communications strategy for the BMC to improve our work and services for existing members and to encourage new and younger people to join the organisation.
- Undertake regular reviews of the security of our website and database systems to ensure that all data is both safe and secure, and that member confidentiality is maintained.
- Work to increase the numbers of women and other groups who are currently under-represented within the BMC's voluntary structure and Specialist Committees.
- Build a culture of continuous improvement across all BMC employees.
- Extend the BMC's work for hill walkers through the appointment of a specialist hill walking officer.

## **5.6 Clubs & Areas**

Clubs and the BMC Area structure underpin much of the organisation's work for climbers and hill walkers. The BMC was set up in 1944 by the leading mountaineering clubs of the time and today we have over 300 affiliated clubs. Clubs remain extremely influential within the BMC and the organisation remains committed to improving the range and quality support services we offer.

England is split up into eight BMC Areas as follows: North East, Lake District, Yorkshire, North West, Peak District, Midlands, London & South East, and the South West all of which have two representatives on National Council. Wales is split up into two BMC Areas as follows: BMC Cymru / Wales (North) and BMC Cymru / Wales (South).

To support clubs and the Areas the BMC will:

- Continually review and improve our club membership renewal process in order to minimise the administration burden on club officials.
- Provide reliable and efficient telephone and email support for clubs and volunteers via the BMC Membership Services Team and the Officer staff.
- Provide clubs with guidance and support on the technical and legal aspects of running clubs to include: child protection, mountain huts, equality, leadership, liability, legal status of clubs and insurance.
- Run an annual seminar for senior clubs and a 2 day safety and good practice seminar for student clubs. Provide training opportunities and workshops for club officials on issues such as dealing with novices in the club environment, young people, pooled equipment and legal matters.
- Promote club membership and Area activities in Summit magazine, the BMC website and the wider media. Actively encourage more climbers and hill walkers to consider joining a club.

- Provide staff support to administer and develop the work of the BMC Clubs Committee; constantly review and improve the services provided to clubs and club members.
- Appoint Regional Officers as follows: London & South East, May 2012; England (East), April 2013; England (West), 2013; South West, April 2014.
- Provide administrative and management support for Area based initiatives and events; actively support and publicise voluntary activities and recognise exceptional effort.
- Offer training courses for volunteers on 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, Health & Safety, the handling and use of equipment, child protection and other topical issues.

## **5.7 Good practice, risk & responsibility**

An important aspect of the BMC's work is to promote good practice and the acceptance of risk amongst climbers and hill walkers. The BMC participation statement is that, 'The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions'. Encouraging participants to accept these risks carries a responsibility for the BMC to provide appropriate technical advice, education and training to enable participants to improve their skills and make informed judgements about their chosen activities.

The BMC will:

- Continue to promote the BMC participation statement and the acceptance of risk in outdoor media, indoor climbing walls and other relevant outlets.
- Improve the quality and manufacture of mountaineering equipment, and equipment standards by investigating equipment failures and by contributing to the development of UIAA / EN standards.
- Expand our package of educational and inspirational training events (lecture series, courses and seminars) under the guidance of the Training & Youth Committee.
- Support the development of the Mountain Safety Forum in England.
- Provide direct training and technical support for clubs, mountain training organisations, BMC regional groups and individuals on technical and equipment issues.
- Create a technical resource base at [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) to provide a definitive pool of information on mountaineering equipment.
- Investigate options for replacing and monitoring fixed equipment (bolts) on crags across England and Wales; update technical documentation for users and those who place fixed equipment. Run training events for volunteers involved in placing fixed equipment.

## **5.8 Climbing walls & competitions**

Indoor walls are one of the main pathways into climbing and as such are a very important aspect of the BMC's work. The BMC will support indoor climbers and the climbing wall industry through the BMC Climbing Walls Committee and will administer a programme of national climbing competition events through the BMC Competitions Committee.

The BMC will:

- Represent the interests of indoor climbers through direct input into the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) and the Climbing Walls Manufacturers Association (CWMA). Work with climbing wall managers on technical and management issues, and the promotion of good practice amongst users.
- Provide quality information and online resources for climbing wall users; run a campaign to promote safety, good practice and environmental responsibility amongst new and existing climbers.
- Run an annual calendar of climbing competitions including the British Lead Climbing Championships (BLCC), the British Bouldering Championships (BBC), the BMC Youth Climbing Series (YCS) and the Leading Ladder.
- Further develop our regional talent identification and development programme centred on key indoor climbing walls around England and Wales.
- Run a biennial conference focusing on training for climbing, and injury prevention and cure.
- Support the development of the National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS) and the National Indoor Bouldering Achievement Scheme (NIBAS).
- Promote safety, good practice and environmental responsibility amongst indoor climbers through an ongoing campaign of posters and literature resources at indoor climbing walls.
- Promote the development of an International standard climbing wall facility which would allow world championship events to be staged in England.

## **5.9 International influence & National Teams**

British mountaineers are highly respected in world mountaineering circles and the BMC plays an active role in the UIAA and IFSC through our representatives on key Commissions and Working Groups. The BMC International Committee supports this work and is responsible for allocating expedition grants. In addition, the BMC Competitions Committee and the office are responsible for the management and day-to-day operation of the British Indoor Climbing Team.

To further this work the BMC will:

- Promote the overseas interests of British mountaineers by working with UIAA and IFSC Commissions on a range of issues including youth development, mountain medicine, major events and equipment standards.
- Work with the IFSC, politicians and Sport England to promote the case for competition climbing as an Olympic sport in 2020.
- Provide administrative, technical and financial support for the National Climbing Team.
- Support the entry fees for British Ski-mountaineers entering ISMF international competition events.
- Run an annual International Climbing Meet to showcase British climbing and mountaineers amongst overseas federations; take part in and promote exchange visits with other countries.
- Provide grant support for significant international climbing and mountaineering expeditions with a focus on younger people.

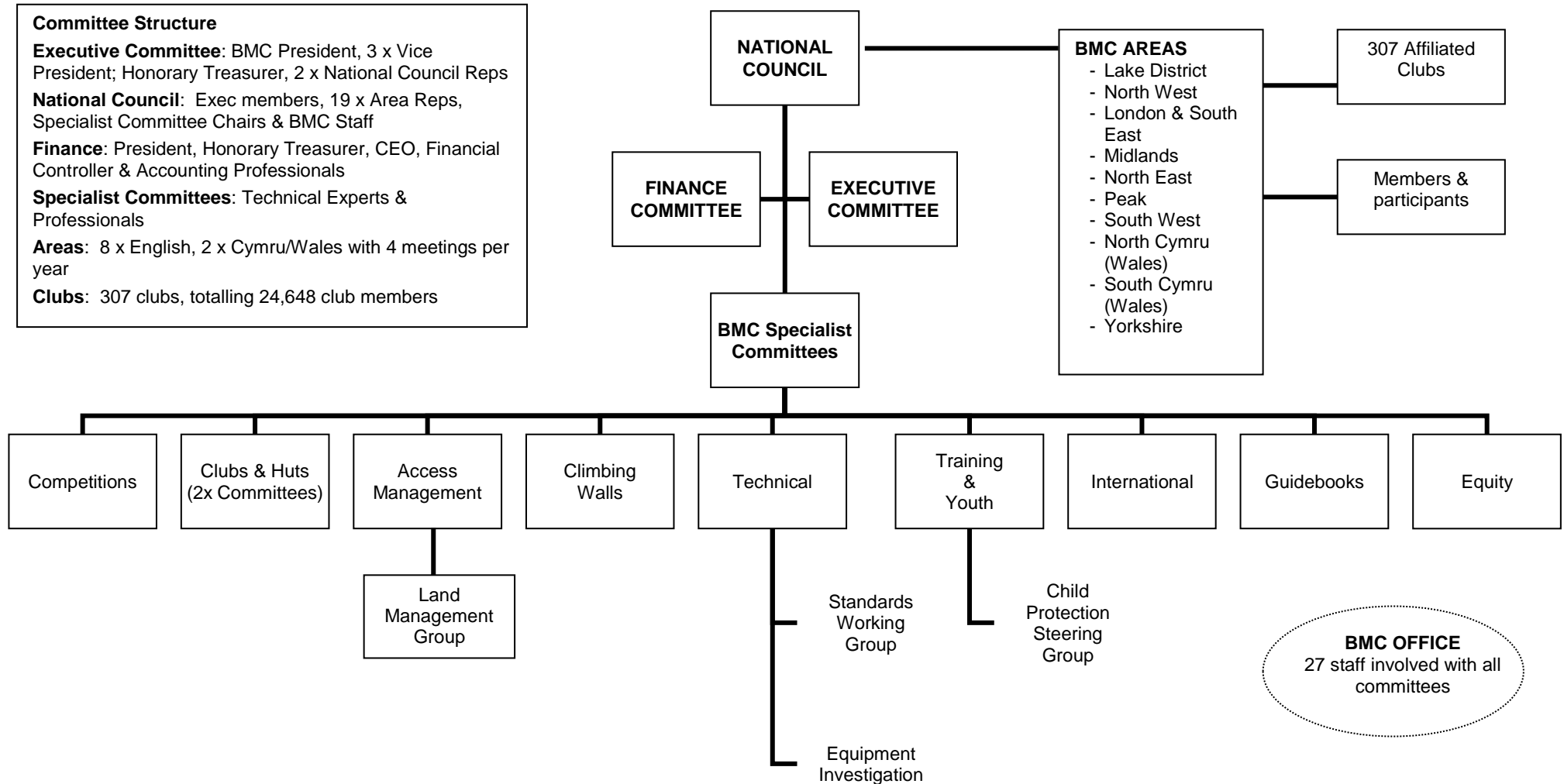
#### **5.10 Diversity & equal opportunities**

The BMC is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of our work and services. The Equity Steering Group oversees this area of work; its role is to ensure that the BMC achieves all necessary national equality standards and works towards removing barriers to participation faced by under-represented groups.

The BMC will:

- Investigate barriers to participation under-represented groups might face.
- Reach black and minority ethnic people, women and girls, people from differing age ranges, and people with disabilities with information about climbing and mountaineering using positive images and role models.
- Develop initiatives and support participation from under-represented groups through a series of events.
- Ensure that BMC staff receive appropriate training in equity issues.

## Appendix i – BMC organisational structure (Jan 2012)



Appendix ii – Staff structure chart (Aug 2013)

