

## **Access rep role description**

Welcome to the BMC's network of access volunteers. The BMC has been built by and depends on volunteers like you. Members, staff and other volunteers hugely appreciate your contribution of time, knowledge and enthusiasm as a BMC Access Rep. Thank you for everything you do on behalf of the organisation and the climbing and walking community.

### **What does a BMC Access Rep do?**

Access Reps report to and work closely with the relevant BMC Access Officer who can provide support and assistance in any areas required. The most important role Access Rep's fulfil is to be a knowledgeable climber and/or walker who is active in their local area. Being able to alert the BMC to any emerging access or conservation issues at crags or in upland areas, as well as having good on the ground knowledge of the area they cover is invaluable.

Beyond this core role, it can be as broad or narrow as you choose to make it. We recognise that people are able to offer different amounts of time as a volunteer and we want to encourage anyone who is keen to get involved. Some Access Reps cover this core role only. Others develop and maintain relationships with key landowners and local contacts with conservation organisations, volunteer on Local Access Forums, represent the BMC with Local Authorities or user group meetings and much more. Regardless of whether you have a lot or a little time to give, we hugely appreciate your input.

### **What can you expect from the BMC?**

- Officer support on complex or difficult issues can range from advice by phone/email to attendance at meetings or site visits.
- The BMC is committed to ensuring that all people have an equal opportunity to participate in climbing, hill walking and/or mountaineering at all levels and in all roles. Our full Equity Statement can be found [here](#).
- Travel expenses – the BMC will reimburse travel expenses for any meetings or site visits relating to BMC access & conservation work. (See appendix 3 for details on how to claim.)
- BMC logoed Access Reps clothing provided.
- You will be added to the BMC website list of Access Reps, including any contact details you give permission to be listed.

### **What does the BMC expect from you?**

When acting as an Access Rep, you will be representing the BMC to partner organisations, landowners, members, other climbers/walkers etc. This means that it is important that you:

- Are passionate about climbing and/or walking and have a good knowledge of the area you cover.
- Behave in a respectful manner at all times, remembering that you are representing the BMC membership as well as the wider walking and climbing community (rather than just yourself as an individual) in the public domain. This includes posting on social media and internet forums in a BMC capacity.
- Maintain a line of communication with your local BMC Area Chair/Secretary and provide access updates for area meetings as needed (either by email/phone or in person at the meeting).
- Understand and follow any relevant BMC policies or guidance (see appendix 2). If an Access Rep is unsure how policies/guidance work in practice, they can speak to an Access Officer for further clarification at any time.
- Access Reps must respect the confidentiality of landowner's details and other private individuals they deal with on behalf of the BMC. (I.e. do not share personal details about landowners publically without first gaining their written permission.)

- If you have a conflict of interest whilst representing the BMC in any aspect of your voluntary role, please declare it to the Access Team ASAP.

## **Appendix 1: Decision making examples**

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list given the extremely varied work BMC Access Reps carry out around the country, but rather to act as an indication of when decisions can be made locally and when they should be escalated to an access officer, Access Management Group, Land Management Group, National Council or Board of Directors. Importantly, Access Reps should always feel able to call or email the relevant access officer to discuss an access or conservation issue regardless of what it is if they don't feel confident in making a decision, or if the issue is complex and there is no obvious way forward.

### **Examples of issues which can be dealt with by Access Reps alone if they are sufficiently confident (recognising that any issue can be discussed with an Access Officer for further clarification if needed):**

- Nesting restrictions.
- Access discussions with landowners.
- Agreement on access routes/parking for crags or hills.
- Organising BMC Events such as crag clean-ups. These are typically organised and run by one or several local volunteers, supported by Access Officers who can provide advice and discuss/agree a budget with volunteers if needed. A BMC Event Approval Form will need to be completed and signed off by BMC Officers in order for the event to be covered under BMC insurance.
- Some Access Reps tackle fixed equipment replacement (bolts/tat/stakes etc). Whilst this work is carried out by the Access Rep and/or other local activists, it is worth discussing with a BMC Access Officer beforehand to ensure any related issues have been taken into account and are understood.
- Feedback on evolving management plans to ensure climbing and hillwalking interests are represented in the policies that will govern future land management of key areas and landscapes. (Access Officers will often assist with this as needed).

### **Examples of issues which should be escalated to a BMC Access Officer:**

- The BMC Access Officer team have oversight of the BMC's Access Budget, and access work involving cost to the BMC should be cleared by one of the Officers first to ensure there is sufficient budget in place to fund a given project.
- Development or cleaning on designated/otherwise sensitive sites
- Complex access agreements.
- Landowner concerns about occupier's liability.
- BMC Access Officers can provide support if difficult conversations/meetings are anticipated with landowners.
- Access reps often become involved in local campaigns on behalf of the BMC, but this should always be after discussion and agreement with a BMC Access Officer.
- Any access or landscape issue you believe to be of national importance.
- Feedback on local issues that may be relevant to national strategic developments or where local experience may be reflected in national policy.
- Any access issue where a member of BMC staff being involved would be beneficial to the outcome.

### **Examples of issues which should be escalated to a BMC Access Officer, who will then refer on to the relevant specialist committee if needed (either Land Management Group or Access Management Group):**

- Suggested changes to existing policies or need for new policies to be produced.
- Land acquisition proposals which have been supported by local area meetings.
- Work to be carried out on BMC owned land.

### **Examples of issues to escalate to the Board of Directors:**

- Anything involving a major policy change which could have implications nationally or across BMC membership.
- Final decision for BMC acquisition/lease/licence of a new crag would rest with the Board, following the local area meeting, Land Management Group and National Council providing reports, feedback and support/otherwise on any proposals.
- Anything involving an accident or death at a BMC owned crag.
- Anything which could have legal implications for the BMC – eg death/serious injury at a non-BMC owned crag which may impact on BMC members insurance policy or case law for liability.

### **Appendix 2: useful resources for BMC Access Reps**

- [BMC Regional Access Database](#) – the single source for all current access information to crag in England & Wales. A short training session with a BMC Access Officer can be arranged to allow Access Reps admin rights for their area, enabling them to update local crags if needed.
- [BMC Occupiers Liability booklet](#) – advice to landowners and managers on liability associated with climbers visiting their land.
- [Natural England CRoW & Coastal Access maps](#) – search facility to show if an area of land is designated as Open Access under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (CRoW) or Marine & Coastal Access Act (MCAA).
- [List of BMC Access Reps](#)
- [BMC Landscape Charter](#) – advice for BMC members/local areas about how to voice their concerns about local landscape issues.
- [BMC Access Manifesto](#) – principles and proposals for government action on access to the countryside for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers
- [BMC Access & Conservation Trust](#) – the BMC's charitable arm which funds landscape scale projects to protect our cliffs, hills and mountains.

### **Appendix 3: Expenses claims**

- Access reps can claim for travel expenses (mileage/public transport costs/parking fees etc) incurred whilst carrying out their role using the BMC's standard volunteer expenses claim form. (Contact a BMC Access Officer for an up to date blank copy).
- Claims may also be made for materials/tools/other costs associated with crag clean-ups or similar events, providing they have been agreed with a BMC Access Officer beforehand.