



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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CLIMBING WALL FACILITIES POLICY STATEMENT

2010

INTRODUCTION

The MCofS strongly encourages both participation and excellence in indoor climbing as a growing key activity to improve our nation's health and foster growth of elite athletes in the discipline. It helps to facilitate growth through many activities, including such enablers as:

- the MCofS Bursary (for all climbing and mountaineering disciplines)
- establishing and guiding training and coaching programmes for all participatory levels
- organising and encouraging competitions at local, national and international level

This statement details the Council's aspirations regarding the development and continuing improvement of Scottish climbing walls as integral to this strategy.

BACKGROUND to FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Since the early 1970s the value of climbing as an educational tool has been recognised and developed in school and youth and community organisations. With this growing interest came the desire for indoor facilities where educational groups could practice at a convenient all-weather venue. Walls were therefore incorporated into sports centres, schools and universities.

Initially they were intended to be used with associated climbing equipment (ropes, harness, helmet etc.) and so concentrated design on height. They were however poorly designed, badly sited to clash with other sports and constructed in unsuitable materials.

Since that time the emphasis on the type of wall has changed as climbing has popularised and wall construction technology has developed to offer a range of styles catering for any particular user requirement as a result. The design of walls must now cater for a range of differing needs.

There are now a variety of different user groups including:

- recreational climbers wishing to increase their personal skills or wishing to continue climbing when the weather is bad;
- recreational users with a lack of local natural climbing venues;
- the introduction of young people to climbing;
- grass-roots participation (recreational and competitive);
- committed climbers wishing to compete in regional, national and international competitions;
- instructional groups developing safe practice to youth groups clubs, and schools;
- instructional training for professionals (National Awards);
- performance coaching at all levels;
- performance training for professionals (forthcoming Coach awards);

[More detail on the history of Scottish wall development is contained on the MCofS Climbing Walls website pages at: <http://www.mcofs.org.uk/walls-history.asp>, and The Climbing Wall manual (BMC 2007)]

MCofS CLIMBING WALL POLICY

The MCofS has had an agreed plan over the past years with Sportscotland (and before that with the Scottish Sports Council) and the first MCofS “Policy”, incorporating a “National Strategy”, was produced in 1993. This was amended by the Annual General Meeting of 1995. The strategy identified and targeted the main Scottish areas requiring wall development. Since 1995, changing trends in climbing; increased participation with indoor climbing being identified as the fastest growth sport in the UK (Mintel Survey); a marked improvement in climbing wall technology and an increase in the number and diversity of wall manufacturers; has required the MCofS to update this “Climbing Wall Facilities Policy Statement”.

MCofS AIMS

- To promote climbing as a suitable activity to increase the fitness and health of the nation by encouraging the development of suitable, easily accessed indoor facilities.
- To promote the development of the types and styles of climbing walls detailed in the Climbing Wall Specification document, where there is a specific identified need for each type.
- To take a strategic approach to wall development across Scotland in relation to the MCofS Climbing Development Framework based on ‘Needs Analysis’; and as a consequence, give support to those projects that fulfil the strategic requirements.
- To promote the improvement, expansion and development of existing walls to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the climbing community and to advise owners of older, poorly designed walls of methods of up-dating them to increase their usage.
- To advise local Councils, Sports Councils and sports centres; schools and universities, local and district councils and any other bodies that are considering developing climbing walls. To give advice on wall location, design, management and maintenance to ensure that walls are successful and their use is maximised.
- To give advice to commercial projects of new walls where the development fulfils part of the strategy and the walls design and management are in accordance with the MCofS guidance.
- To give help and advice in coordination with sportscotland and The Sports Lottery Fund in securing funding.
- To help and advise local climbers in attempts to secure new walls in their area.
- To maintain and up-date a database of Scottish climbing wall information.
- To maintain links with the BMC Climbing Wall Committee and liaise with them regarding the recommended guidance on wall design and management, the specifics of wall development in Scotland and to maintain and update this information contained in the Climbing Wall Manual.
- To maintain links with the Association of British Climbing Walls.
- To forge partnerships with Scottish climbing walls through the Scottish Climbing Walls Network (SCWN).