

# Mountain Advisers And Assessors



Item Code FS120417 March 01 Edition no. 2

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## Introduction

This is one of a set of factsheets on Mountain Activities, introduced in February 2001. In particular it replaces FS120405.

It provides assistance to those people who are appointing County/Area Mountain Activity Assessors and County, Area or District Mountain Activity Advisers. Additionally, the factsheet provides guidance to County/Area Activity Assessors on their role in The Scout Association's Activity Authorisation Schemes.

Further editions will be published in the light of experience. The publication of future editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

For simplicity the term 'Assessor' in this factsheet refers to County/Area Mountain Activity Assessors, while the term 'Adviser' refers to either County/Area Mountain Activity Advisers or District Mountain Activity Advisers as appropriate.

## The Difference Between an Assessor and Adviser

Assessors are appointed by County or Area Executives to advise District and County/Area Commissioners on the level of Authorisation appropriate to individual applicants. Assessors must be technically qualified and accept the Aim and Method of The Scout Association.

Assessors' actual appointments will reflect their technical qualification, e.g. Hill Walking and /or Mountain Biking Assessor, Climbing and Abseiling Assessor, Multi-pitch and/or Single Pitch Climbing Assessor etc. Assessors need not be Members of the Association but must be subjected to The

Scout Association's confidential enquiry process. Districts do not appoint Assessors.

Advisers are appointed by District or County/Area Executives to advise the appropriate Commissioners. They promote all forms of mountain activities in order to develop young people intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially.

## The Role of County/Area and District Activity Advisers

Advisers are appointed to encourage participation in any or all of the mountaineering activities provided by the Association. They should be proactive in increasing participation in activities on moors, hills, mountains, rock faces or climbing walls. They should advise Leaders on the level of activity appropriate to the intellectual and physical capabilities of the young people concerned. This is achieved partly by means of the Association's Authorisation schemes and also by meeting with Leaders, attending District meetings and promotional evenings. They should ensure that those being introduced to these activities are safeguarded against risks from their own lack of experience by having guidance from a properly trained and experienced authorised person.

The Adviser should counsel against any code of practice or local rule that unnecessarily restricts access to mountain activities. Remember our unofficial motto is to enable more young people to experience activities safely.

## The Scout Association

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## Adviser Qualification

The essential qualifications are:

- to have a clear understanding of the physical and mental limitations of young people, and a knowledge of the Aim and Method of The Scout Association;
- to be a sufficiently mature and responsible individual to advise firmly against over-ambitious plans and should be able to offer suitable alternatives. They should not be under 25 years of age, and will probably be over 30;
- to have a wide and **current** experience of most of the mountainous areas of the UK under all weather conditions. (Note: this requirement could be partially relaxed for a District Adviser.);
- to have reasonable experience of alpine or similar mountaineering abroad, including experience of glacier travel and other problems not found in UK mountains. (Note: this requirement could be relaxed for a District Adviser.);
- to spend ideally, at least 15 days per annum in the mountains either in the UK or abroad, though not necessarily with Scout parties;
- to have considerable experience of planning and carrying out mountain expeditions, lasting a number of days and nights, and including mountain camping;
- to have a good all-round knowledge of rock-climbing in all its aspects in a number of different areas. There is no requirement for an Adviser's own climbing standard to be particularly high. (Note: this requirement could be relaxed for a District Adviser.);
- to have a natural desire and ability to practically promote mountain activities;
- to have the ability to organise training courses, weekend meets, etc;
- to be able to administer the Authorisation Schemes (including the arranging of practical assessments) and to oversee the work of

Assessors. (Note: this requirement is applicable only to County/Area Advisers.);

- To be fully conversant with the booklets *Safety on Mountains, Single Pitch Climbing and Abseiling, Tread lightly* published by BMC and the publication *Mountain Leadership*. Additionally they should regularly read at least one mountaineering magazine to keep up to date.

It is highly desirable that Advisers should hold relevant national governing body qualifications unless also appointed as an Assessor. Advisers should have mountaineering experience that extends wider than that gained within a purely Scouting framework. They should however have a Scouting background (though not necessarily in a warranted capacity).

### **Note: from the First of January 2004 Advisers must hold a Mountain Training Board Award**

#### **District Advisers**

District Advisers do not have a direct role in the Activity Authorisation procedure. However, the active presence of a District Mountain Activity Adviser as part of the District Team means that quick on the spot advice should be available to all personnel in the District considering applying for Authorisation or needing advice on any mountaineering matter. Such advice should reduce the workload of the Assessors and ensure that application forms contain all relevant information.

#### **The Assessor**

Assessors must be technically qualified for the level to which they are assessing. Assessors are appointed by the County/Area Executive to assess the level of knowledge and experience of applicants for Mountain Activity Authorisation and recommend to the appropriate Commissioner the level of Authorisation that should be considered. Assessors normally work under the direction of the Assistant County/Area Commissioner (Activities) or the Adviser. In making the

appointment the County/Area Executive should specify the supporting management and reporting structure.

With the exception of multi-pitch climbing, an Assessor must hold an appropriate National Governing Body Award. The holding of such an award supersedes the Association's scheme of assessment and a potential Assessor should not be assessed on his technical capability.

When appointing an Assessor from outside The Scout Association, the County/Area Executive is bringing the expert into the formal structures of The Scout Association. The Assessor will be covered by The Association's Public Liability Insurance Scheme in the same way as any other person appointed to be in charge of, or assist with, Scout activities.

The appointment of an Assessor must be reviewed every 5 years.

### **Assessor Qualifications**

To recommend Authorisation in the various mountain activities, Assessors must hold at least the award specified below, or its fully recognised equivalent;

#### 1. Climbing:

- Single Pitch and Abseiling (including walls, etc.): UK Mountain Training Board Single Pitch Award
- Multi-pitch: Scout Association Syllabus (see Note 1)
- Snow and Ice climbing (above grade 1): Mountain Instructors Certificate [see: note 2]

#### 2. Scrambles (grade 2+3)

- Mountain Instructor Award or meet the Scout Association Syllabus (see note 1)

#### 3. Hill Walking:

Summer Conditions UK – Terrain One:

- A National Mountain Leader Training Board Summer Mountain Leader Award

Summer Conditions UK – Terrain Two:

- MIA or A National Mountain Leader Training Board Summer Mountain Leader Award plus an approved Assessor course.

Winter Conditions UK – Terrain One and Two:  
[see note 2]

- Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board Winter Mountain Leader Award plus an approved Assessor course

Note: Guidance on approved Assessor courses maybe obtained from HQ.

*[During the transition period (expiring 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002) existing Assessors who do not meet this criteria may continue to act as Assessors.]*

### **Scout Association Principles**

When Assessors are appointed for their technical skills, with little or no Scouting background, they may need help to understand the Aim and Method of The Scout Association. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities) or Advisers can provide this training in many ways. It is essential that the Assessor is not working in ignorance of Scouting practices.

### **Moderation of the work of Assessors**

It is essential for the provision for mountain activities that the assessment recommendations made by Assessors are consistent and approximately equivalent throughout the country. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities) or Advisers tasked with the overall supervision and management of the Assessors should monitor the recommendations of the Assessors and

arrange occasional meetings of all the Assessors to ensure that there is a coherent County/Area policy regarding the recommendations to the District or other appropriate Commissioners. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities), Advisers and Assessors should also consider sharing best practices at regional meetings.

### **Note 1: Qualifications for appointment as an Assessor - Multi-pitch Climbing**

The national governing body qualifications for multi-pitch climbing are aimed at those who are at least semi-professionally involved in teaching rock climbing. It is thus unrealistic to expect more than a small number of those volunteering to work in this capacity with the Association to hold such a qualification or to complete the courses necessary to qualify. The relevant national governing body qualifications are the Mountain Leader Training Boards' awards as Instructor (Mountain Instructor Award, Mountain Instructor Certificate) and the Guides' Carnet: holders of these awards automatically fulfil all the technical requirements for appointment as an Assessor for multi-pitch climbing. Other volunteers may be appointed as multi-pitch climbing Assessors if they meet the following technical criteria:

- Have a wide range of **multi-pitch** climbing experience extending over at least the previous five years and in a minimum of three different climbing areas. This experience must total at least 75 days in the past five years. Single pitch experience, while valuable, should be additional to the 75 days multi-pitch experience;
- be **currently** leading to Severe or a higher grade;
- It is desirable **but not essential** that Assessors for multi-pitch climbing should have attended one or more formal rock climbing courses under the instruction of the holder of an MIA, MIC or Guides' Carnet; have climbing experience that extends wider than that gained within a purely Scouting framework,

possibly including active membership of a climbing club; and have a Scouting background (though not necessarily in a warranted capacity).

- It is essential that the Assessor for multi pitch climbing hold a first aid qualification including hypothermia and hyperthermia.

### **NOTE 2: Winter conditions**

- The Scout Association follows the Health and Safety Executive definition which reads:
- *“Winter” means when Winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast; this cannot be defined by a portion of the year. Summer means any condition not covered under “Winter”.*
- In amplification of this statement leaders should note that snow/ice cover is not the only defining feature. Severe cold, high winds and shortened daylight hours will effect a risk assessment in such conditions.
- It should further be noted that it is almost impossible to define Winter or Summer conditions in respect of the glaciated areas of the European and similar mountains. At all times of the year an authorised leader must be aware of the risks of a new fall of snow, avalanches, wind effects etc. and be able to assess the risks involved and the need for a possible change of plan.

### **Publications cross reference**

Current editions of:

*Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association*

*Mountain Biking*

FS120412

*Risk Assessment*

FS120000

*Authorisations - A District Commissioners and  
Group Scout Leader's Guide*

FS120002

*Mountaineering with Scouts - The Vital Culture*

FS120415

*Application for Authorisation for Hill Walking*

FS120416

*The Scout Association's Authorisation schemes  
for activities in Moors Hills and Mountains*

FS120418

*Mountaincraft and Leadership (Langmuir)*

ISBN 1850602956.

*Safety on the Mountains*

ISBN.0903908271

*Single Pitch Climbing and Abseiling (The Scout  
Association),*

ISBN 0 85165 294 8