

Sandstone Leaders Award - Training Course Outline

This training and assessment programme is relevant to the Sandstone Outcrops of the Weald of Sussex and Kent, including such venues as Harrisons, Bowles, Stone Farm, High Rocks and the smaller venues listed in the current guide. It DOES NOT cover any other venues, sandstone or otherwise, and does NOT include the chalk climbs mentioned in the Sandstone Guide book.

The award may be accepted by such indoor walls as High Sports, the Adur Centre, Evolution etc, but this is entirely at their discretion. You will normally be asked to produce your pass page, 1st aid certificate, up to date logbook and possibly 1st aid certificate, public liability insurance and supporting documents such as risk assessments. A phone call to the relevant wall will make this clear, as different venues have different rules. In all cases, you will normally be asked to undergo an induction session as well.

IMPORTANT: THE SANDSTONE LEADERS AWARD IS NOT A NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY AWARD.

However, the BMC/MLTE do recommend it as a suitable "site specific" scheme, and it is run according to the principles laid out in the MLTE leaflet "Site-Specific Climbing Wall Guidance Notes, see <http://www.mlte.org/content.php?nID=7&catID=44> .

For 30 years the Sandstone Leaders Award was run by the Outdoor Education Departments of the Local Education Authorities in the South East, to offer quality training for their teachers and youth workers. In recent years, these departments have decided they can no longer administer the award, and it was in danger of disappearing altogether. In 2008, a Sandstone Award steering group was formed to counter this. Members were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, including: private outdoor education companies, educational establishments, charities, youth organisations & MLTE courses providers. New course notes, a new syllabus and assessment procedure were drawn up in the Autumn of 2008, and the look award launched in 2009.

Prior to Attending Training, You MUST:

1. Register with Plumpton College, pay the fee and print off the log pages/syllabus from www.sandstoneaward.com
2. Have personal experience of climbing on at least 3 Sandstone Outcrops
3. Have climbed at least 20 routes and be confidentially able to climb 4a.
4. Be familiar with, and able to competently use, the following: helmet, harness, belay plate, suitable climbing ropes, knots such as figure of 8, bowline, clove hitch, Italian hitch, stopper knot overhand knot etc.
5. You should be interested in teaching and supervising groups on the Sandstone.
6. Before attending training, you should have observed on **at least** one supervised session .

The Training is NOT:

1. A personal skills course
2. A learn to climb course
3. An intro to Southern Sandstone course

On the Day

The weather may well be cold, wet and windy, so please come prepared! Please bring a packed lunch, plenty of drink etc. Some equipment will be provided but please bring personal equipment, e.g. helmet, harness, belay device, krab, rock boots, plus any other group top roping equipment which you usually use (ropes/slings but not nuts or lead gear).

The programme is as Follows:-

Meet 9.15 a.m. for a 9.30 a.m. start at Harrison's Rocks Car Park.

The following topics will be covered in the day, although the time spent on each will depend on candidate's abilities:

1. The award, the remit and progression through it
2. Prior preparation, including paperwork and equipment
3. Selection of appropriate equipment
4. Briefings on arrival, approaching the crags and the interaction with other groups/climbers.
5. Setting up climbs, using simple methods like bolts & trees
6. Environmental issues of rope drag, topping out, descent, lowering off
7. General environmental issues, including paths, flora & fauna, noise, litter, toilet stops, graffiti etc
8. Group control, setting boundaries etc
9. Fitting equipment, handling of children and adults and child/instructor protection.
10. Teacher/helper briefing and responsibilities
11. Personal belaying skills, including lowering off when required
12. Teaching belaying using a variety of devices, to include: "Bucket" devices, Grigri, Italian Hitch, waist belay and a look at the "Harrison's belay with the rope in one hand.
13. "Bell ringer" belaying with a Grigri and Italian hitch – its benefits, shortcomings and dangers.

The course will then move to another crag, such as Bulls Hollow or Bowles, and cover:

1. A "run through" of a typical climbing session for novices
2. Bouldering/"weaseling", how it fits in to a session, why we do it, coaching benefits and environmental impact
3. More complex set ups for top ropes, using multiple anchors and static line

Finally, the course will conclude with a discussion on:

1. Logbooks, gaining further experience, using the Plumpton web link to up-date and get log pages etc
2. Legal responsibilities, inc. insurance, Local Authority forms, risk assessments, consent etc.
3. AALA issues
4. MLTE awards and progression, especially CWA/SPA
5. Review and next steps – offer personal feedback to candidates.

Depending on the time of year, this course may be run in one long day, or over two days if the daylight hours are short.