# Mountain rescue services report surge in callouts amid social media influence



Mountain rescue services in England, Wales, and Scotland have reported a significant rise in callouts, attributed mainly to the influence of social media and the reliance on navigation apps that are often inadequate for outdoor conditions. For the first time, mountain rescue teams in England and Wales were called out every day throughout 2024, while Scotland recorded over 1,000 rescues in a single year, marking a historical milestone.

Analysis from Mountain Rescue England and Wales, alongside data from Ordnance Survey and shared exclusively with The Guardian, reveals that rescues across the two countries increased by 24% from 2019 to 2024. The most notable rise in rescues occurred within the 18-24 age demographic, where figures nearly doubled from 166 in 2019 to 314 in 2024.

Mike Park, the chief executive of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, noted the challenges in pinpointing a “definitive reason” for this demographic shift, but he acknowledged the role of social media in attracting more individuals to high-risk areas. “But we know from incident reports that more and more people are tempted into risky locations by Instagram posts and the navigation apps being used aren’t always suitable for an outdoor environment,” Park stated. “Add to that a tendency to follow popular routes online without knowing the hazards and context, and it’s not surprising that those likely to be relying most on their phones are the ones getting into difficulties."

Despite the rise in callouts among younger people, older age groups have not been exempt from needing assistance. The 40-44 age category recorded 196 callouts last year, while rescues of individuals aged 75-79 also saw a doubling, with numbers rising from 56 to 112. Additionally, the data highlighted 93 rescues of people over the age of 80, up from 75 in 2019.

Regions with the highest demand for mountain rescue included Eryri (Snowdonia), the Lake District, and the Peak District, as well as other national parks. Areas in south Wales, Northumberland, and Cornwall also saw significant callout activity, as reported by Ordnance Survey.

Separately, Scottish Mountain Rescue announced that its teams attended a record 1,000 callouts in 2024, involving 740 individual rescues as well as 17 animals. This involved 25 civilian mountain rescue teams, three Police Scotland mountain rescue teams, and one RAF mountain rescue team.

The continuous demand placed on rescue teams has raised concerns among volunteers. Park remarked that the reality of teams being called out every single day in England and Wales represents only "part of the story," highlighting the mounting workload on unpaid volunteers, many of whom balance these duties with full-time employment.

Good Friday emerged as the busiest day for outdoor activities in 2024, according to Ordnance Survey data. Nick Giles, the managing director for leisure at Ordnance Survey, commented on the importance of preparation for outdoor pursuits, suggesting that a lack of it could compromise a day out. “A lack of preparation could turn a wonderful day into a ruined and upsetting experience,” he noted. Giles also advised anyone venturing into remote areas to use both the OS Maps app and a paper map to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/AnnualReview2024.pdf> - This document supports the claim of increased mountain rescue callouts in England and Wales, highlighting the challenges faced by rescue teams, especially around popular locations like Snowdonia.
* <https://www.scottishmountainrescue.org/facts-and-statistics/> - This webpage provides statistics and reports for Scottish Mountain Rescue, which corroborates the rise in rescues, including the milestone of over 1,000 callouts in a year.
* <https://www.mountain-training.org/help/resources/blog/2024-safety-report/> - The Mountain Training Safety Report discusses the increase in outdoor activities and the strain on mountain rescue services due to factors like social media and over-reliance on technology.
* <https://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/annual_review/> - This webpage links to annual reviews from Mountain Rescue England and Wales, which provide detailed statistics and insights into the rise in callouts across different regions.
* <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/> - Ordnance Survey provides maps and data that could support claims about the busiest locations for mountain rescues and outdoor activities, such as the Lake District and Peak District.