



What's your perfect role?

Thinking of joining guiding but not sure that you have the time to commit regularly? Here are plenty of ideas for important jobs that you can do in your own time, and even from your own home!

Being involved in guiding is a fantastic opportunity! You can make new friends, have fun, improve your skills, add to your CV and make a real difference to the lives of today's girls and young women. However, sometimes it can feel like there just aren't enough hours in the day to do everything you would like to. Busy lifestyles – juggling work, school, family and friends – can mean that not all of those who are enthusiastic about guiding can commit a regular block of time.

By volunteering for guiding, you are helping to provide a unique girl-only space. This is essential to give the time and space for girls and young women to develop their potential, learn new skills, grow, speak out and be listened to, and have lots of fun!

Guiding welcomes all and any offers of help and support from people from all backgrounds. Volunteers who can only give time irregularly are still highly valued and important and there is a large variety of roles available for volunteers who would prefer to give their time on a

more occasional basis. Not only is having a flexible role more convenient for some volunteers, it also helps those who regularly lead units, by freeing up their time from other jobs so that they can focus on the girls and young women. Of course, the roles described here are not exhaustive – if there are other support roles that need doing then go for it!

About Girlguiding UK

- One in four eight-year-old girls is a Brownie.
- Almost half of all women in the UK have been involved in guiding at some stage in their lives.
- We're part of a worldwide organisation with over ten million members in 145 countries.

Being flexible

For people who cannot make regular meetings, there is always the option of joining a Leaders' rota and helping with units every couple of weeks. Some areas even have emergency rotas, in case Leaders at any of the local units cannot make meetings at short notice. However, there may also be the option of playing an even more flexible part in the life of a unit or District, although working out how may need a little imagination!



The right skills for the job

When you are considering what role in guiding might best suit you, think about what you are already good at and enjoy. You could write a list of your skills and experience, and then see what jobs might need doing that match up with your list.

- If you have experience organising events or planning parties could you run a fun day, or do the admin for a camping trip?
- If you have a head for figures could you help out with the unit accounts, or get Gift Aid set up for a unit?
- Good with statistics? You could help co-ordinate waiting-to-join lists and allow more girls to join units.
- Work in PR? Many areas have PR advisers, not all of whom can volunteer time regularly, yet want to make a contribution.
- Even if your top skill is spotting a bargain in the shops there's a job for you! Why not help out your local unit by doing its shopping alongside your own, and keeping its craft and activity materials and snacks topped up? You could even offer to help out at one of our Trading depots or volunteer shops.

Other roles to consider

Buildings owned by local guiding can require a lot of upkeep and maintenance, so any DIY or trade skills such as plumbing are welcome and can save guiding a lot of

money. Campsites require regular TLC, right down to mowing the lawns! The retired parents of one Leader in Stockport offered to be caretakers of their local HQ, which was a fantastic help. Perhaps you could refurbish furniture or make soft furnishings for the meeting hall or holiday house, or help girls and young women to develop skills in doing this – a much needed form of support.

Often, it's the unusual, one-off events that need a few extra pairs of helping hands. One Dad in Herefordshire gave 20 hours of time in one go to help with his daughter's unit's sleepover. Another helped out with a barbecue and nature walk. Trips out, camps, fairs, fun days and parties can all need a few extra supporters to ensure that things go smoothly. Large events would welcome help with car parking and marshalling and are often the most fun events to help out with!

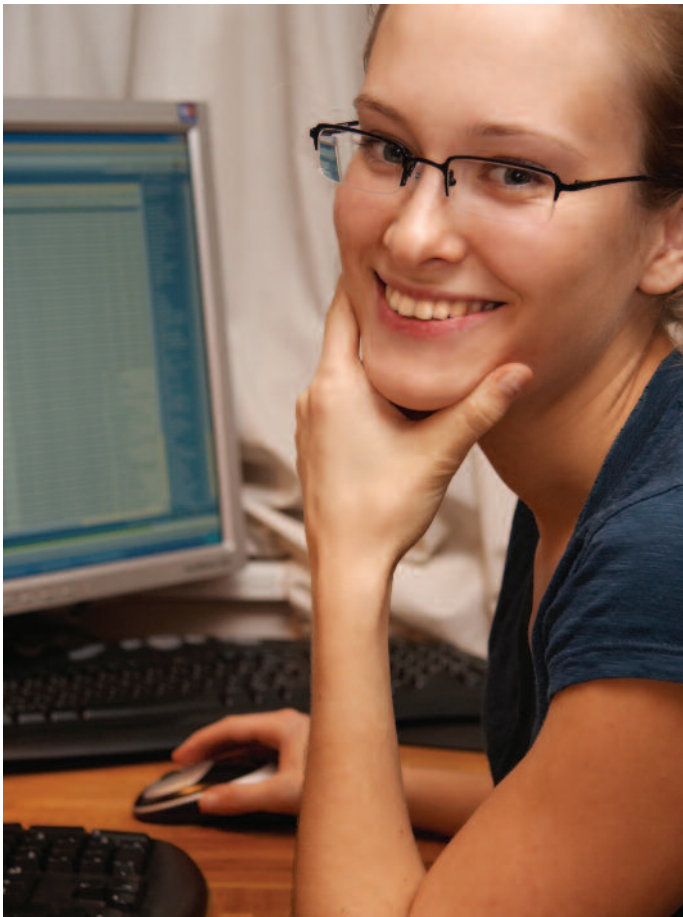
Running a unit, or organising guiding in a larger area, involves a lot of behind-the-scenes admin which can be shared between lots of volunteers to save one person being swamped. Volunteers could take on tasks from typing up minutes, organising rotas or sending out letters, to giving a hand preparing activities or downloading and printing resources from the website. Or, if you're a whizz online, you could help (or better still, help the girls) to set up or manage a website.

Units could often do with a bit more cash, so volunteers to help out with fundraising or writing applications for grants or other local funding are a great help! Similarly, you could help to advertise the unit, for new members or volunteers, perhaps by dropping leaflets into local schools.



It's good to talk!

If you can't immediately think of a role that is suitable for you, don't worry! Have a chat with your local Unit Leader about what might be helpful to do – you could always chop and change the jobs you do over time. If you're having trouble thinking of something, chatting to people may give you new ideas and enthusiasm! Similarly, if you've had a great idea, or something's working particularly well, make sure you share it with other potential recruits who might be in a similar situation.



Case study: You're never too old

In one Division, Jeanne, a housebound octogenarian, who had never previously been involved with guiding, accepted a request to help out with bookings for trainings in the area. She started looking forward to the post arriving, so she could sort and check everything, and was amazed at the number of people involved in the organisation. She even attended one of the training days and thoroughly enjoyed meeting and being welcomed by everyone she had been booking for, as well as learning about the new Brownie Programme. She is now full of enthusiasm for guiding, feels more valued through her volunteering, and even gets more visitors!

Case study: Balancing the books

When setting up a new unit, Elizabeth had plenty to do, so she welcomed an offer from her husband Steven to do the accounts for the unit. This means that she has more time to focus on planning the sessions for the girls, and he has ensured that the unit maintains a healthy balance sheet. His role is important, not only in keeping the accounts in order, but also for reining Elizabeth in when she wants to spend too much!



Looking for a unit?

There are guiding units throughout the UK. To find your nearest one, or for more information about guiding:

Telephone: 0800 1 69 59 01

Email: joinus@girlguiding.org.uk

Website: www.girlguiding.org.uk

For resources, visit our website at

www.girlguiding.org.uk or

our online shop at www.girlguidingukshop.net



12 hour challenge

The 12 hour challenge is the perfect opportunity to get involved in more flexible support roles for a short period of time, though of course you are more than welcome to keep on helping beyond your 12 hours! One County made sure that it used its Challenge volunteers according to their skills, and ended up with people in a variety of roles including promoting disability awareness, telling girls about an elephant orphanage, teaching sign language and even instructing girls in playing golf!

Criminal record disclosures checks

Any new Leader or helper with unsupervised access to girls and young women is asked to agree to criminal record disclosures checks (although Girlguiding UK's safeguarding process will be revised in 2009). However, many support roles do not require adults to be checked, which can save time for everyone. Visitors who come into unit meetings for a one-off session do not need to be checked as long as they are not left alone with unit members. If you have any concerns or queries about child safety consult your local Commissioner or the website (www.girlguiding.org.uk).



Key contacts

Your County contact:

Your local contact:



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girls in the lead

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If you want more information about guiding, visit www.girlguiding.org.uk or talk to your Commissioner about other sources of information.

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