



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

**Girlguiding**

**The County Commissioner**

**WELCOME**  
**Book**



# Hello

Congratulations on your new role and thank you for becoming a county commissioner.

This booklet aims to support you during your six-month induction period and includes an overview of the role, an induction checklist, an overview of the training and support available as well as some room for you to plan your development alongside your mentor.

Please use the booklet to make notes, plan and gather contact details as you settle into your new role.

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# Inspiring girls starts right here

Congratulations on choosing to become one of our amazing Leaders. Without passionate people like you, Girlguiding just wouldn't happen.

I'm thrilled you've volunteered to support girls to have new adventures, make a difference to their communities and speak out about what matters to them.

It's an exciting role, and you'll get lots of support along the way. You might have already met your mentor, who's there to help. Your country or region chief commissioner can also offer advice and guidance.

Your Welcome Book will be helpful too. Inside you'll find plenty of useful information about the role, where to get support and more info, plus learning and development opportunities.

Feel free to go through the book with your mentor at your own pace, it might take a few months to get through it all. There's a helpful checklist, so you know you've got everything covered.

Thank you so much for volunteering with us. It's only with support like yours that we can continue to help girls be their best.

Good luck with your new role - *you'll be brilliant.*



Tracy Foster, Chief Guide, UK



*If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask for help locally or contact our Volunteer Development Team on 0207 834 6242 (ext. 3012) or [commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk)*



# Our values



Caring

CHALLENGING



Empowering



FUN



INCLUSIVE



Inspiring





## You and your mentor

As a county commissioner, you will be supported in various ways during your induction to the role. Depending on your country/region, you may have a separate mentor or your chief commissioner/deputy chief commissioner may mentor you.

### What is mentoring?

The aim of mentoring is to ensure you have someone to show you the ropes and to assist you in developing the skills to lead the county.

Your mentor is there to support you while you settle into your role and will usually have experience of being a county commissioner. They can be really useful if you want to bounce ideas off someone or seek guidance and feedback.

### Mentor agreement

When you first meet your mentor, it can be useful to agree how you will work together and how often you will be in touch. This mentoring agreement may be helpful for you to understand each other's role in your relationship.

## We agree that:

1 The mentoring relationship will last for

2 We will meet at least  with contact via other methods (such as email or phone) between meetings.

3 If for any reason either of us cannot make a meeting we will inform the other person at least 24 hours in advance and arrange an alternative date.

4 We will follow Girlguiding's Code of Conduct and notify our local commissioner if we feel this has been breached.

## 5 We agree that the mentor's role is to:

- Start and end the relationship as appropriate.
- Guide the mentee through their induction and welcome them into their county commissioner role.
- Support the mentee in identifying areas of potential development.
- Maintain confidentiality with the mentee, but informing the commissioner if they discuss anything which is deemed to be a breach of Girlguiding's Code of Conduct.
- Give the mentee responsibility for their own learning.
- Provide feedback to the mentee which is specific, timely, genuine, objective and forward-looking.

## 6 We agree that the mentee's role is to:

- Maintain regular contact with the mentor, arranging meetings throughout the year.
- Work with the mentor to develop a personal development plan and set her own learning goals.
- Take responsibility for her own learning.
- Work through the induction checklist with the mentor.

**We agree to the above statements.**

Signed:

**Mentor:**

**Mentee:**

### **What other support, assistance and guidance will I have?**

Talk to your mentor, chief commissioner and outgoing county commissioner about other support available to you in your county, country or region. Is there a network of peer support that you could benefit from? Who else can you talk to and what training is on offer?

# Your role

**The county commissioner is responsible for and accountable to the whole membership in the county. By leading a team of dedicated and skilled commissioners and advisers, you will ensure that quality guiding is delivered at county level.**

As county commissioner you are both an internal and an external 'figurehead' for guiding. You have five years in which to lead, contribute and grow both yourself and guiding, and this is your opportunity to drive guiding forward in your area. You can bring about change that improves the opportunities for girls and young women to experience guiding.

Girlguiding county commissioners are visionary leaders who can formulate and follow a strategic plan, communicate effectively at all levels, work in a team and network with local communities.

Being county commissioner offers a fantastic opportunity to influence guiding in your area and create real change. It is up to you how you do this - some county commissioners work as a team to divide up their roles and responsibilities at county level, others have assistants

to support them and others look at the skills and abilities of other volunteers in the county and share tasks with those who may have specialisms or expertise in those areas.

In your role you may also be a trustee of guiding both at county level and within your country or region, so it is essential that you get to know your responsibilities and sources of assistance.

The following role description aims to cover some of the key roles and responsibilities that you may have in your county, but please remember that this can vary depending on the needs of your area. You are encouraged to think about which of these tasks you can take on and which ones can be delegated or offered to others, to support their development and the development of guiding in your county.

## The role of a county commissioner

### Who can do this role?

County commissioners are women over 18 years old. They should already be, or be willing to become, a member of Girlguiding.

### Do I need a qualification?

You don't need a specific qualification to become a county commissioner, but training and ongoing support will be given to you as part of this role, which includes a national/UK-wide induction weekend for new county commissioners.

### What is the purpose of this role?

Becoming a county commissioner offers a fantastic opportunity to influence guiding in your area and create real change that improves the opportunities for girls and young women in your area and their experience of Girlguiding.

### What will I do in the role?

The responsibilities listed on the next page can be shared among the county, division or district team. As county commissioner you will not be expected to carry out all of these tasks and may choose to delegate parts of the role to other volunteers, modelling effective team work and working together to make the most of the skills and time you are each able to give.

## Strategy

- Develop a shared vision for guiding in your county and devise a county plan with your team, to be reviewed and updated regularly.
- Understand the key aims of the UK-wide strategy (Being our best) and how to relate this to county-level strategies, annual planning and local guiding.
- Keep up to date with country/region and Girlguiding priorities and regularly share updates with your teams, linking these to county-level interests.
- Undertake the legal responsibilities and financial duties associated with being a trustee for Girlguiding in your county (where applicable).

## Leadership and team management

- Lead and support a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure high quality guiding is happening in your area, focusing on providing more opportunities for girls to get the most out of guiding.
- Identify and evaluate the skills and roles required to build an effective team and appoint accordingly.
- Manage enquiries, complaints and disputes in a timely fashion.
- Manage safeguarding queries and ensure you and your team have the necessary training to do this effectively.
- Ensure local guiding business is conducted efficiently and effectively via team meetings; establish appropriate methods of communication and build effective relationships throughout the team.
- Recognise the commitment of all adults within the area, giving informal thanks and, where appropriate, nominating individuals for awards.
- Help members of the team to identify and fulfil training needs.
- Recognise when support is needed by members of the team and respond appropriately.

## Membership growth

- Utilise local knowledge and data on volunteer and girl recruitment and retention to build a county growth plan tailored to local needs.
- Lead on strategies for recruiting and retaining more girls and volunteers in your area, delegating actions to the team.
- Understand membership needs, be aware of change and look at local demographics and external developments.
- With support from local teams, ensure that new volunteers receive a warm welcome and full induction to the area, developing creative ways to support teams to do this.
- Support work around girls transitioning between sections and transferring within the area.
- Promote inclusion and provide support to units in your area to include all girls and adult volunteers.

## Administration

- Develop budgets and take responsibility for funds and financial matters, ensuring policies are updated and adhered to.
- Effectively manage your roles and responsibilities associated with any Girlguiding property held in your county.
- Ensure that all administrative resources for the area run effectively and online databases are kept up to date.
- Submit and update training and event dates on the area calendar, or equivalent.

### *Being part of your local guiding area*

- Promote local, UK and international opportunities available within guiding as well as externally, and encourage young members to take part.
- Promote opportunities for training, activities and fundraising.
- Maintain good communications with other commissioners in your area.
- Keep up to date with new resources and programme initiatives, and use them as appropriate.
- Work with division and district commissioners to promote high quality guiding and build successful working relationships.

### *Being part of Girlguiding*

- Be committed to undertaking relevant training, including the UK county commissioner induction and refresher training weekends.
- Learn about the structure of Girlguiding and how your responsibilities and position fit within it.
- Be willing to learn about Girlguiding's UK-wide and local strategic aims and how these are being delivered locally.
- Learn about Girlguiding's policies and Code of Conduct.
- Be an ambassador for the values of Girlguiding.

### *Promoting Girlguiding*

- Represent the county at external events where possible.
- Promote a positive image of Girlguiding at public events.
- Implement and develop external partnerships, eg with local groups, Trefoil Guild, local authority.
- Familiarise yourself with Girlguiding's key messages and promote these in your external communications.

### *What will Girlguiding do for me?*

- Provide a thorough and appropriate induction to the role and organisation, including a handover with the outgoing county commissioner.
- Allocate you a mentor to support you in your role (where appropriate).
- Help to develop skills and abilities to perform the role by providing relevant training opportunities (including digital learning where possible and a UK-wide training weekend at the start and midway point in your role).
- Provide guidance via the County Commissioner Handbook and support from HQ.
- Provide support and development from fellow volunteers, including a commissioner at the level above (chief commissioner), other commissioners and advisers.
- Host meetings and events to share information at a local and national/UK level.
- Reimburse agreed expenses (agreed locally and may differ around the UK).
- Provide references.
- Provide a clear complaints procedure and support to resolve problems or disagreements.

## Qualities, skills and abilities

A commissioner is one of the key roles that support volunteers to help girls and young women to experience how great Girlguiding can be. While we can offer you training and support we would expect you to possess or be willing to develop the qualities, skills and abilities outlined below.

### Personal qualities

- An open and approachable manner.
- Reliable and trustworthy.
- Creative and enthusiastic.
- A commitment to ongoing personal development.
- A commitment to the Girlguiding values.
- Enjoyment of meeting new people and having fun.

### Skills and abilities

While these skills and abilities are not essential when starting, they should be developed as part of the role.

- Excellent communication skills.
- Strategic thinking skills.
- Inspirational leadership skills and an awareness of different leadership styles.
- Good critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- Conflict management skills.
- Delegation skills.
- Ability to formulate a vision for the county and develop and implement county plans and county growth plans.
- Ability to manage a team effectively and manage individual volunteer performance.
- Ability to chair meetings.
- Ability to motivate and inspire adult volunteers.
- Ability to deal with difficult situations.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Ability to manage time and prioritise tasks.
- Personal resilience and self-awareness.
- Computer literate and comfortable with using databases and email.
- High level of organisation, and ability to work on your own initiative.
- Innovative and creative thinking.
- Risk management.
- Change management.
- Flexible working.
- Guiding knowledge, to include guiding operations, strategy and governance.

Girlguiding welcomes volunteers of all backgrounds, ages, cultures, faiths and abilities.

We are flexible, and volunteering can be arranged to fit around a busy lifestyle.

# Your personal development plan

A personal development plan (PDP) is a space for you to identify your development needs, prepare a learning programme, update your progress and set realistic timescales to help you keep on track. The aim is to encourage your ongoing development in Girlguiding and give you the opportunity to develop skills that are helpful to the role.

With your mentor or chief commissioner, look at the role description on pages 7-10. What skills and abilities are you already able to demonstrate and in which areas would you like to develop while in the role? Use the plan on pages 12-13 to map out your learning and development goals and how you will achieve them.

You will find a list of learning and development opportunities on pages 14-16 of this book; however, your mentor may also have ideas about how to develop in the role, eg by shadowing other team members or attending local training.

Remember to keep your learning goals...

## SPECIFIC:

Are the details clear and focused on your learning goal?

## REALISTIC:

Is it realistically achievable?



## MEASURABLE:

Will it be useful? How will it be measured?

## ACHIEVABLE:

Do you have everything you need to complete the task?

## TIME-BOUND:

Does the action have an achievable target date? Has a review date been set?

[illegible]

[illegible]

# Your learning opportunities

	Country/region induction	National induction weekend	National mid-term weekend
Identification of individual learning needs	<p>Discussion with chief commissioner and mentor to identify individual learning needs, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core competencies identified in role description.</li> <li>● Consideration of individual's prior experience, within and outside guiding.</li> <li>● Joint assessment of current priorities for the county concerned.</li> </ul>	<p>Pre-weekend questionnaire, requesting details of training needs, sent to each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participant.</li> <li>● Chief Commissioner.</li> </ul> <p>Completion of this questionnaire should be informed by outcomes from the initial discussion of learning needs with the chief commissioner.</p>	<p>Pre-weekend questionnaire, requesting details of training needs, sent to each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participant.</li> <li>● Chief Commissioner.</li> </ul>
Inspiration	<p>Initial discussion with chief commissioner to encourage newly appointed county commissioner to develop a vision for her county.</p>	<p>Chief guide/deputy - vision for Girlguiding.</p> <p>Discussion with panel of established county commissioners (to include commissioners from varying county types/sizes).</p>	<p>Chief guide/deputy - vision for Girlguiding.</p>

Now you have your personal development plan you can use the following table to find out what will be covered in your country/region induction and in the national induction. Is there anything that you would like to know more about that isn't covered here? Speak to your mentor about this and add it to your plan.

	Country/region induction	National induction weekend	National mid-term weekend
<b>Strategy</b>	<p>Introduction to 'Being our Best' national strategy.</p> <p>Introduction to Girlguiding values.</p> <p>Introduction to country or region strategy and any implications for county plans.</p>	<p>The county commissioner's role in supporting the delivery of 'Being our Best'.</p> <p>How to develop a vision for your county.</p> <p>How to develop a county plan.</p>	<p>Update on Girlguiding's national strategy, with an emphasis on developments which will have implications for counties (eg new programme framework; quality standards etc).</p> <p>Reviewing and updating county plans in the light of progress and new developments.</p>
<b>Governance</b>	<p>Any specific information about country/region governance structure.</p> <p>Chairing meetings.</p>	<p>Introduction to the trustee role.</p> <p>Risk management.</p>	<p>Reviewing and refreshing county structures (optional).</p>
<b>Leadership</b>	<p>Introduction to key people in the country or region and the county (including commissioners, advisers, trainers, staff).</p> <p>Familiarisation with current volunteer appointments and qualifications.</p> <p>Introduction of options for supporting development of team members.</p>	<p>Introduction to leadership and management.</p> <p>Talent spotting, team building and delegation; empowering volunteers through opportunities</p>	<p>Succession planning - for the individual and for the county.</p>

	Country/region induction	National induction weekend	National mid-term weekend
<b>Skills development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints processes.</li> <li>GO, including using data to support growth.</li> <li>Join Us and recruitment processes.</li> <li>Communication channels.</li> <li>Introduction to key policies and where to find them (including the County Commissioner Handbook).</li> </ul>	<p>Optional sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and PR basics.</li> <li>Membership growth basics.</li> <li>Difficult situations (complaints and conflict management).</li> <li>Managing change.</li> <li>Recognising and encouraging 'good guiding' (to include introduction to quality and girl-led guiding).</li> <li>Budgets and finance.</li> </ul>	<p>Optional sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership growth.</li> <li>Conflict management.</li> <li>Flexible guiding.</li> <li>Involving young people in decision making.</li> <li>Inclusion.</li> <li>Stress management.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<p>Familiarisation visits to units, events etc.</p> <p>Familiarisation with other local organisations which can support Girlguiding.</p>	<p>Where to get help - including HQ structures and support.</p> <p>Looking after yourself.</p>	<p>Celebrating success.</p> <p>How can HQ support you better?</p>

For other learning and development opportunities, please consult the 'Learning opportunities' page on GO and search for 'Learning and development' on the Girlguiding website.

# Your induction

Your induction period is a time for you to learn more about your role and to start considering your vision for the future of the county. This is an essential time to ask questions and seek support to ensure that you feel confident in your role and clear about your responsibilities. Your induction begins as soon as you have been appointed and can last for up to six months. It can involve your chief commissioner, a mentor and, if helpful, the outgoing commissioner and one or more holders of Module 2 of the Training qualification.

## Getting started

# 1

### Have an induction meeting with the chief commissioner.

This is an opportunity to:

- Review the role description.
- Identify key priorities for the county.
- Identify an appropriate mentor (note that, in some cases, the chief commissioner may decide to take this role herself).

# 2

### Have an introductory meeting with your new mentor (this could be the former county commissioner, the chief commissioner or someone else).

Building on the previous discussion with the chief commissioner, this can help to:

- Identify existing skills/knowledge and areas to develop.
- Review Girlguiding's values and code of conduct
- Agree a personal development plan.
- Agree on how often you will meet and what you would like to achieve from mentoring.

### Book onto national county commissioner induction training.

These events are held twice each year at venues around the UK, with the aim of exploring the county commissioner role within the wider context of Girlguiding strategy and your legal responsibilities as a trustee.

Invitations are sent directly to new county commissioners by HQ and you should aim to attend within six months of appointment. It is a chance to learn what you need to know to perform your role effectively, legally and safely on behalf of your county and of Girlguiding. You will have the opportunity to:

- Identify the key elements which make up the county commissioner role and explore your role in leading, managing or delivering these.
- Build a peer network.
- Develop a vision and plan for your county.

The cost of accommodation and food is borne by Girlguiding and transport costs can be claimed from your county. You can find out more about the training by searching for 'Training' in the County Commissioner Handbook (online).

## Next steps

Whatever your individual needs, you'll have the opportunity to draw on a range of learning options designed to help you to get up to speed with your new role. We recommend that you try to cover the following areas within your first six months:

### Meeting people

- Introduce yourself to all the adults in existing teams and more widely in the county. Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it - at a meeting, socially, in person, in a phone call, via social media etc.
- Find out what are the needs of guiding in your location, to help the teams know what it is they have to achieve.
- Understand how the business of the county is done through setting up, leading and maintaining a number of adult volunteer teams.
- Understand the governance structure of the country/region.

### *Making good use of volunteers' time and talents*

- Check the situation with current volunteer appointments and qualifications on your teams - find out who might need to renew a qualification, or extend or complete an appointment.
- Demonstrate understanding of the correct recruitment processes and your role in appointing and inducting new volunteers including new leaders, commissioners, advisers and trainers.
- Use this as a way to identify opportunities for individuals to put their skills to good use for guiding - are there other roles or other people?
- Find out how to support the progress and development of team members in their roles and the importance of giving thanks and recognition. This will include plans for how you and others in the county induct and mentor your own new team members, unit leaders, trainers, specialist advisers etc.
- Find out/review how the GO and Join Us database operates and what your responsibilities are as county commissioner. This learning could come from an existing County GO user or via your country or region office.

### *Reviewing and setting the direction for the next three years*

- Through discussion with individuals and/or your team, gain an understanding of how local guiding should develop - gaps to fill, successes to build on, new approaches to try.
- Find existing action plans or create targets, goals or action plans to put these ideas into a plan for the county to implement. Share this with your chief commissioner as required and then with your teams. This will include the county's growth plan.
- Review the county constitution.
- Understand the UK strategic plan (Being our best) and how this relates to the local strategy

### *Making sure the communications flow*

- Communication should flow upward from the girls to you via their leaders, as part of girl-led guiding; and from HQ to your leaders and girls via the country or region communication processes of meetings, emails and direct mailing from Girlguiding.
- Find out the processes for what happens when you receive a concern or complaint from a parent, leader or other Girlguiding volunteer, and what your role is in moving to a resolution.

### *Knowing your role in keeping young members and adult volunteers safe*

- Look at the County Commissioner Handbook for guidance and information about your role.
- Look at the 'Responsibilities of commissioners' page of the website. Know the main Girlguiding policies and your role as county commissioner in making sure they are followed.
- Be briefed by the chief commissioner on the current procedure for dealing with a safeguarding concern, following the Safeguarding policy.
- Attend safeguarding training (all modules).
- Understand the safety requirements for running residential events, how to sign off a REN form and the need for leaders to have a home contact for outings and events away from home.
- Discuss how members of the county would report incidents to you.
- Know who to report a serious incident to and how to obtain the appropriate forms.
- Talk to your team about the importance of risk assessments.
- Read up on the approach to managing adult membership and the associated policies and procedures.

### *Leading and contributing to meetings*

- Be briefed on the frequency, nature and dates of country/region meetings you will be asked to attend as a county commissioner.
- Draw up a plan for the meetings you need to chair in the county for the year ahead, and organise meetings as appropriate.
- Read through the minutes of county meetings held in the previous 12 months to familiarise yourself with ongoing business and decisions to be made or followed up in the months ahead; decide who to talk to about progress, and when.
- If you haven't chaired a meeting before, ask your mentor to arrange for you to observe others chairing meetings.

### *Your financial responsibilities*

- Meet the county treasurer to be briefed on the accounts, banking arrangements and details of auditors, and be updated on recent financial decisions made in the county.
- Find out how to complete the relevant census records using County GO, and what the arrangements are locally.
- Review the budget with your mentor and ensure a budget is put in place for the year ahead.
- Ask for guidance around what would trigger the registration of counties or divisions as charities in their own right.

### *Understanding how guiding works for our young members*

If you are new to Girlguiding, or it has been a while since you have been with a unit, regularly arrange for as many of these experiences as you can in your first year, so you are confident in your knowledge of what good guiding is.

- Visit units from various sections.
- During a unit visit, observe how all members of the unit team, especially young leaders and unit helpers, are involved in planning and carrying out the programme with the girls.
- Attend a unit team's planning meeting.
- Understand and observe the use of the Five Essentials of guiding in a unit's programme.
- Talk to a unit leader about how the unit's programme has provided variety and balance over the last term or over the year.
- Visit a meeting/event where there are members from more than one section to find out how they interact.
- Know who the appropriate division/county advisers are and find out about their roles in supporting guiding locally.
- Over a period of time, compile or update a list of people and organisations that can support the programme in your area.
- Discuss with your team who could contribute to the programme or support a leader.
- Lead a group in organising a relevant training or other event for members which promotes development between sections.

### *Making your Promise*

If you are new to guiding, discuss the Promise with a member of your choice. When you are ready, make the Promise at an appropriate occasion.

## The County Commissioner Conference and third-year training

Every two years, Girlguiding holds a County Commissioner Conference. This is an opportunity for county commissioners to come together to attend workshops related to the strategic plan, learn about any national strategic updates, network and share experiences, ideas and feedback. All county commissioners will be invited to attend the conference by HQ.

Girlguiding also offers optional events which enable you to familiarise yourself with your responsibilities relating to property management and staff management.

When you are entering your third year in post, you will also be invited to another national training weekend. The emphasis for this weekend is on reviewing and embedding your strategies and initiatives in your county and seeing where you can further improve the quality of guiding for girls. You'll have the opportunity to review your progress and consider what adjustments you need to make to embed your plans, and you'll also have the opportunity to share and celebrate your achievements to date.

**More information about this training can be found in the County Commissioner Handbook online, or you can email [commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk) for more details.**

# Induction checklist

**The checklist, over the following pages, is to be completed by you and your chief commissioner/mentor during your first six months. It doesn't all need to be covered in one day!**

It aims to cover the essential elements of the county commissioner role to ensure that you feel confident and prepared, and that you know where to find the information that will be useful to you in your role.

If there are areas of the checklist that are challenging to complete, these can be added to your personal development plan and worked through with your chief commissioner or mentor at a timescale that works for you. Remember that you can share some of these tasks with an assistant or with other members of your team.



## 1 The county commissioner role

### Getting started

	Tick	Date
1.1 An induction meeting has been held with the chief commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.2 A mentor has been allocated	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.3 The county commissioner has booked on to the national county commissioner induction training	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.4 We have reviewed the role description together and discussed role responsibilities and capabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.5 We have discussed the county commissioner's prior experience, skills and knowledge being brought to the role	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.6 We have discussed areas for development	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.7 We have completed a personal development plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.8 We have reviewed Girlguiding's values	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.9 We have looked at the Code of Conduct	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.10 The county commissioner has made the Promise (if new to guiding)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.11 The county commissioner is aware of her role as a trustee and her responsibilities in respect of any property held	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.12 We have looked at the County Commissioner Handbook and relevant pages on the Girlguiding website	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 2 The county and team

### Meeting people and making good use of volunteer time and talents

		Tick	Date
2.1	We have discussed setting up, leading and maintaining volunteer teams within the county	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.2	We have discussed the country/region governance structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.3	The county commissioner has met key people in the country/region and in the county (including commissioners, advisers, trainers, staff)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.4	The county commissioner is familiar with current volunteer appointments and qualifications and has identified opportunities for volunteers to move into different roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.5	The county commissioner is clear about the options for supporting development of team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.6	The county commissioner can demonstrate the correct recruitment process for appointing new volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.7	The county commissioner can explain the procedure for welcoming and inducting new volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.8	The county commissioner can explain the importance of thanks and recognition and explain her role in this process	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.9	The county commissioner has visited a variety of units and events	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.10	The county commissioner is aware of other local organisations that can support Girlguiding	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.11	The county commissioner knows who she will have the most contact with and has their contact details	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### 3 Strategy

## Reviewing and setting the direction for the next three years

		Tick	Date
3.1	We have discussed the national strategic plan and the county commissioner's role in delivering it (Being our best)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.2	We have talked about the country or region strategy and any implications for county plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.3	We have discussed the county's challenges and opportunities and the county commissioner has gained an understanding of how local guiding could develop - gaps to fill, successes to build on, new approaches to try and potential for growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.4	We have discussed the county commissioner's vision and goals for the county and made a joint assessment of the current priorities for the county	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.5	The county commissioner has completed a county plan and shared this with the teams involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.6	The county commissioner has completed a growth plan with her teams and shared this with those who are involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.7	The county commissioner is able to explain how she has used information about the county and national strategy to help teams know what they need to achieve	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### 4 Communications

## Making it flow

4.1	We have discussed the complaints process and the role of the county commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.2	The county commissioner understands Girlguiding's communication channels and how to encourage information flow from girls to commissioners via leaders, and the cascading of Girlguiding initiatives to leaders and girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.3	The county commissioner is receiving commissioner content in <i>We discover, we grow</i> and can demonstrate how to use the information	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 5 Knowing your role

### Keeping young members and adult volunteers safe

		Tick	Date
5.1	The county commissioner knows her responsibilities for GO in the role (including data protection)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.2	The county commissioner is familiar with the key policies and where to find them (including the County Commissioner Handbook)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.3	The county commissioner has completed A Safe Space training, discussed her role relating to A Safe Space, and can explain how she would make a referral and what information is needed to do this	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.4	The county commissioner can explain the safety requirements for residential events and can demonstrate the approval of a REN form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.5	The county commissioner can explain how members would report incidents to her and can state who to report a serious incident to and how to obtain the appropriate forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.6	The county commissioner can explain the need and processes for conducting a risk assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.7	The county commissioner can explain the processes for managing adult membership including: warning, suspension, restriction, refusal and withdrawal of membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.8	The county commissioner has discussed what approach she would take if she had an issue she was unable to resolve	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 6 Meetings

### Leading and contributing

6.1	The county commissioner knows what meetings and events she will be asked to attend/chair/visit for the year ahead	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.2	The county commissioner has read through the minutes of previous meetings in the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## 7 Finance

### Your responsibilities

Tick

Date

**7.1** The county commissioner has met the treasurer to be briefed on accounts, banking arrangements and details of auditors and be updated on financial decisions made

☐

**7.2** The county commissioner ensures an appropriate budget is set, monitored and adhered to for the next 12 months

☐

**7.3** The county commissioner knows the requirements that would trigger the registration of a county or division division as a registered charity in its own right

☐

## 8 Understanding guiding

### Working with our young members

**8.1** The county commissioner has visited units from a range of sections and can relate the activities seen to the Five Essentials

☐

**8.2** During a unit visit, the county commissioner has observed how all members of the unit team, especially young leaders and unit helpers, are involved in planning and carrying out the programme with the girls

☐

**8.3** The county commissioner has attended a unit team's planning meeting

☐

**8.4** The county commissioner is familiar with the programmes, resources and uniform for all sections

☐

**8.5** The county commissioner has discussed the quality standards

☐

**8.6** The county commissioner has talked to unit leaders and young members about how the unit's programme has provided variety and balance over the last term or over the year

☐

**8.7** Over a period of time, the county commissioner has compiled or updated a list of people and organisations that can support the programme locally

☐

**8.8** The county commissioner has led a group in organising a relevant training or other event for members which promotes development between sections

☐

# Sharing tasks

Once you have completed your induction and have an overview of the different roles and responsibilities at county level, think about which tasks you would like to take on and how you can share parts of the role with others in your county. It might help to think about your strengths and think about the skills, knowledge and expertise of the people around you. Who would excel in certain roles? Who can help you? Are there any gaps? How will you fill these?

Tasks I will take on:

Tasks I am responsible for, but will share with other members of the team:

# The Girlguiding Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct aims to ensure that Girlguiding volunteers behave in a way that reflects our core values as an organisation.

It states that:

**As a Girlguiding volunteer you must always:**

- **Be a good role model** with behaviour and an attitude that are in line with our **values** and the Promise.
- **Comply with all applicable UK laws and guidance.** If your unit is based outside the UK or you are part of an activity outside the UK, you must also abide by the law of that country.
- Make sure you **follow Girlguiding policies and procedures** and re-read them from time to time as they may be amended.
- Be **responsible and accountable** in the way you perform your role.
- Be fair and treat everyone with **respect** and **dignity** in accordance with our Equality and Diversity policy.
- **Respect others' privacy** in line with our policies and guidance.
- **Communicate** with others in an **open and respectful** way whether in person, by phone, in writing or via digital media.
- **Work together** with Girlguiding members, their parents/carers and members of the public to promote Girlguiding's mission and values.

**As a Girlguiding volunteer you must not act fraudulently or dishonestly, or do anything which brings (or is likely to bring) Girlguiding into disrepute or have a negative impact on Girlguiding or its reputation.**

**What happens if a volunteer doesn't follow the Code?**

Where someone doesn't follow the Code it is referred to as a breach. If someone believes you have acted in a way that breaches this Code they are entitled to let Girlguiding know and Girlguiding will formally investigate.

As a county commissioner you may find the policy for 'Managing concerns about adult volunteers' helpful in responding to breaches to the Code of Conduct. This can be found on the Girlguiding website.

# Being our best

## Girlguiding's strategy until 2020

### Our commitment

By 2020, we will empower more girls to find their voice and be their best through high-quality, girl-led programmes delivered by inspirational Leaders.

### Our vision

An equal world where all girls can make a positive difference, be happy, safe and fulfil their potential.

### Our mission

Through fun, friendship, challenge and adventure we empower girls to find their voice, inspiring them to discover the best in themselves and to make a positive difference in their community.

### Our plan

We want to see an equal world where girls can make a positive difference, be happy, safe and fulfil their potential. This is what our members and supporters told us Girlguiding would need to do to be our best for girls and young women in that world.

# Excellence

**We will get better and better  
at all that we do for girls**



# Capacity

**We will work collaboratively to improve our processes and decision-making**



# Access

**We will work together to ensure that more girls from all backgrounds benefit from what we do**



# Voice

**We will listen to girls and promote their voice.**



**You can find out more information, resources and updates by searching for 'Being our best' on the Girlguiding website.**

**What does the Being our best strategy mean for you and your role? How can Excellence, Access, Voice and Capacity become part of your county strategy?**

Discuss this with your mentor:

# Policies and procedures

Girlguiding policies are updated regularly, in order to ensure we are delivering safe and quality guiding for girls. To find the most up-to-date version of a policy, visit the Policies section of the Girlguiding website.

As a County Commissioner, you may find the following policies and guidance documents useful to read during your induction:

Complaints  
policy



Finance  
and Property  
policy



Marketing,  
Communications  
and Media  
policy



Data  
Protection  
policy



Learning and  
Development  
policy



Safety and  
Safeguarding  
policy



Equality and  
Diversity policy



Membership  
and  
Recruitment  
policy



Employers'  
Liability policy



Public  
Liability policy



Personal  
Accident and  
Medical  
Expenses  
policy



A Safe Space



Code of  
Conduct



# Support and guidance

We hope that this booklet answers some of your initial questions about your role. However, if you would like further support and guidance or have any questions that have not been covered in this booklet, you can:

- Search for 'New commissioner' on the Girlguiding website.
- Visit the 'Welcome to your role' section of the online Girlguiding County Commissioner Handbook.
- Speak to your mentor or chief commissioner.
- Make the most of the skills, experience and knowledge of your team.
- Use the search function on the website for specific queries.
- Contact Girlguiding HQ: 020 7834 6242.
- Contact Commissioner Support via email: [commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk)

## Keeping in touch

There's always so much going on in guiding. That's why we like to keep you in the loop and up to speed, online and in print.

### Discover Grow

Landing in your inbox every two weeks is Discover Grow, our e-newsletter that will round up all the most recent goings-on in guiding.

### Guiding Magazine.

Dropping through your letterbox each term is Guiding Magazine. You'll find it packed full of activity ideas, great guiding conversations and insightful interviews.

### [girlguiding.org.uk](http://girlguiding.org.uk)

Got a question about guiding? Chances are the answer will be on our website. What events are coming up? Easy. What training can you get? Sorted. If it doesn't have the answer you're looking for, it'll tell you where you can find it.

### [facebook.com/girlguidinguk](https://www.facebook.com/girlguidinguk) [@Girlguiding](https://twitter.com/Girlguiding)

Keeping in touch works both ways. Share your photos, views and stories with us on Facebook and Twitter (where you can also get all the latest news and updates from us too).





WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

**Girlguiding**

This Welcome Book is designed to support you in your role of county commissioner and includes what to expect from your induction, where to find the information you'll need, how to access additional support and how to continue learning and developing in your role.

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